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*The Chronicle of Gudrun.*



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HERWIG PARTING

*Engraved by McQuinn & Walker from a Sketch by J. Noel & Co. P. 4*













# GUDRUN

A STORY OF  
*THE NORTH SEA*

From the Mediæval German

EDINBURGH  
EDMONSTON & DOUGLAS  
MDCCCLXIII









## PREFACE.

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THIS little story embodies the substance of the Gudrunlied, an old German epic poem well known and highly valued among scholars; and which, in the opinion of the best critics, ranks second only to the Nibelungenlied. The Danish traditions upon which it is founded are supposed to have been cast into shape before the end of the tenth century; the mediæval German poem known as the Gudrunlied was written about the year 1220; and the only copy of this extant dates from the comparatively recent period of the year 1517. This copy was made by command of the Emperor Maximilian I., and carefully preserved in a parchment volume in the library in the Castle of Ambras in the Tyrol, together with the Iwein of Hartmann von der Aue, and the Eric of the same poet,



the latter identical in subject with Tennyson's poem of "Enid."

Since the discovery and publication of the Gudrunlied by F. H. von der Hagen in the year 1820, it has been a fruitful source of discussion among German critics. Jacob Grimm, Müllenhof, Ettmüller, and others, devoted themselves to the task of weeding and expounding the garbled manuscript; and Simrock furnished an excellent translation into modern German.

Müllenhof, following the same line of criticism which Lachmann applied so successfully to the Nibelungenlied, arrived at the conclusion that large portions of the Ambras manuscript, including the entire history of Wild Hagen's childhood, were the spurious additions of later hands; and of the 1700 four-line verses contained in the poem, only 415 escaped his merciless pruning-knife.

On the other hand Gervinus, Schott, Wilmar, and other scholars of high standing, are inclined to accept the main substance of the poem as the genuine product of the thirteenth century, though they do not deny that it has been fre-



quently tampered with. Von Plönnies, a recent critic, adopts Müllenhof's views in some points, but adds to his selection more than 200 verses which he avers bear evidence of authenticity.

In this strife of opinion with regard to the real worth of the Ambras manuscript two courses lay open to the writer. The first was to make a metrical translation of Müllenhof's edition; the other was to give a free prose version which, while it remained faithful to the spirit of the poem, might suit the taste of modern readers. For the latter course precedent was found, in some degree, among the Germans themselves.

San Marte (Schulz of Berlin) has given a lyrical version of the Gudrunlied with considerable success; Doctor Gervinus, the eminent Shakspeare critic, has attempted the same subject in hexameters; Anton Niendorf wrote a spirited ballad version, and of this last the writer has availed herself in several passages. The Gudrunlied, unlike the Norse and Highland tales, which have preserved in the mouths of the peasantry their simple garb of a thousand years past, and are therefore in their literalness



of high value as aids to history, has reached us through the distorting medium of half-taught scribes and monkish chroniclers. Incongruities and useless repetitions mar its beauties; the trail of priestcraft is visible in its pages; and it is plain that gaps in the original manuscript have been filled up with inferior matter. These and other considerations determined the writer in favour of a free prose version, which might please young and old, and help to keep alive the interest kindled by the Norse Tales and other recent works.

While allowing herself the freedom necessary in giving the story a form suited to modern tastes, she has earnestly striven to preserve the strength, freshness, and pathos which mark the original; and if she has failed in her task the reader must not attribute her short-comings to a want of pains-taking or reverence for the subject.\*

\* The writer has thought it best to follow the original in the use of "thee" and "thou." Any apparent discrepancies will, therefore, admit of justification. In the scenes between Gerlinta and Gudrun the former "thous" Gudrun as a mark of contempt or anger; Gudrun answers her with "you," the more ceremonious term due to her age and her dignity as queen.



The story lays no claim to the consideration of antiquarians and scholars. It is written for those general readers who will take delight in the portraiture of the heroic men and women of the sturdy, steadfast, old Danish stock, to which the English people owes some of the noblest and most abiding elements of its greatness. For those who desire to know more of the origin of the Gudrunlied, its historical and local probabilities, she has written a brief introduction, the perusal of which may possibly add to the interest of the story.

EMMA LETHERBROW.

BOWDON,  
*March 12, 1863.*





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## CHAPTER XXI.

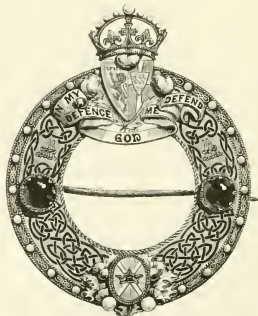
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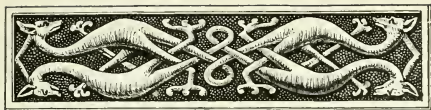
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## INTRODUCTION.

IN considering the circumstances under which the Gudrunlied and other early German poems had their origin, we must go back to a time coeval with the birth of Christ, and recur, to the oft-told tale of the migrations and irruptions of the northern races.

We have all heard how the ancestors of the ruling European races came, in ages past, from the plains of Asia in successive hosts ; how the Teutons drove before them their predecessors the Celts ; how that branch of the Teutons settled in Scandinavia, grew to be a mighty people, and, overflowing the bounds of their native country, descended into mid-Europe to seek fresh pastures and fresh foes. The reader who wishes for a true and vivid picture of the creed and mode of life of these Scandinavians before they quitted their birthplace, cannot do



better than read the Norse Tales and study the deep and exhaustive opening essay by Dr. Dasent. In this brief sketch, which only treats of the German branch of northern tradition in so far as it bears upon Gudrun, we have to do with the Scandinavians in the name and character they assumed in their new quarters, viz., as Germans, and we must try to picture their life during the period in which Gudrun and its sister poems arose.

From their cradle in Scandinavia they brought their creed, which was grand, stern, and gloomy as their native pine forests. Odin or Wuotan receives their chief homage; they have hymns in which they chant the praise of his wisdom and power, or bewail the fate of Balder the beautiful sun-god. They too have visions of a brighter world, where the heroes who fought stoutly on earth will sit with Odin in the Walhalla, and drain exhaustless casks of mead. Their early history, which, like that of most primitive nations, is inextricably mingled with the story of their gods, is handed down in wild chants, which they sing in unison, keeping time with the clashing of their swords upon their shields; and in these they tell of Siegfried the dragon-slayer, and commemorate the deeds of



Berig and Filumer, early kings of the Goths, and bewail the fate of Arminius, the heroic chief of the Cheruskans, who freed northern Germany from the Roman yoke. It was in such songs and chants that the subject-matter of the *Vol-sung Tale*, the story of Father and Son, and the legend of the fight of the *Hiadnings*, or, as the Danish version has it, the *Hegelings*, were preserved from time immemorial. Cast into shape at first by a single mind, they soon became, from the interest of the subject, the property of all the northern races, and are met with in lands widely sundered. Borne by means as manifold and imperceptible as those by which thistle-seeds are wafted, they reached the moors of Scotland, the bleak coasts of Orkney, the dark forests of Germany, the green valleys of Ireland. The highland grand-dame taught them to the boy at her knee ; the peasants of the Danube repeated them in their huts ; the Icelandic mother sang them to her babe while the northern lights gleamed across the sky, and the ice-floes thundered on the shore. Harsh may seem the syllables, rude may be the theme ; but these wild lays, shouted out with a forcible enunciation of the consonants impossible to our vocal organs, and empha-



sized by bellowing into the hollow of the shield, claim our reverence as the first poetic efforts of the race ; in them lies the germ of those exquisite creations which have given us "nobler loves and nobler cares," the most precious heritage which the centuries have gathered for our favoured time.

With their songs they likewise retained the usages of the North ; and the example of the Romans could not wean them from their frugal, hardy mode of life. In lands where fruit-trees flourished they contented themselves with yearly crops of wheat and barley, and the bread and ale which these yielded ; they remained faithful to their communistic division of the land, distributing it yearly among the people by lot ; and it was long before they could believe that the silver cups which the Roman generals presented to their chiefs were of more value than their own rough vessels of red earthenware.

The fight, the chase, the long-inherited feud, occupied their souls ; and when they were not battling with the Romans they turned their arms against each other, or against the Gauls. Revenge was a sacred duty in their eyes ; drinking and gambling were the excitements of their leisure hours, which were too numerous



in the fertile districts of mid-Europe, where the rich virgin soil, and the woods swarming with game, yielded them food without the tax of hard and constant labour. Their women, burdened with the nursing of children, household matters, and the oversight of the fields, were yet content with their lot; for they had the reward their sex prizes most, in the respect and fidelity of their husbands. They guided the men with their counsel, praised their prowess, and when they returned from battle, counted their wounds with exultation. The children who sported round their rude huts were healthy and cheerful. They looked with eyes full of innocent wonder upon the savage deeds and gestures of those whom they only knew as tender parents; but in a little while they too learned to string the bow and hurl the spear, and to seek, like their fathers, their chief good in battle and foray.

So the round of centuries wore on, and the vast pine-woods, the trackless moors, ceased not to resound with the tramp of migrating hordes, the shouts of warriors, the cries of the wounded, the wail of the bereft. The Roman armies of occupancy were no longer able to restrain them; the Goths had planted their foot in Thracia,



the Vandals had taken possession of Spain, the Huns, the latest arrivals from the Asiatic plains, had stricken the lands lying round the Danube with panic and ruin.

The bands of the great empire were loosened; the rotten state was ready to fall into the hands of the barbarians. Already they had tasted the sweets of victory and plunder in the outlying towns and cities they had taken; the possession of wealth and luxury, the pride of conquest, had aroused new feelings in their simple natures; they had begun to quarrel for gold and for authority among the wrecks of overthrown citadels.

We look almost with trembling upon this fierce, untaught, deep-hearted people, at the moment when the sceptre of supreme sovereignty, held in turn by Assyrian, Greek, and Roman, should pass into their reckless hands. Whence should come the light to their darkness, the word to calm their furious passions, the hand to restrain? Rome must fall; her riches and territories would be given into their hands; all the appliances of her civilized life would tempt them to indulgence. The sustenance which they had been forced to wrest with hard labour from the frugal North, would pour upon them in the abundance of temperate



lands; the corrupt mythology of the Romans would wean their hearts from their old gods, who, stern and terrible though they were, had preached to them rough virtues of the sword and plough. What should save these restless hordes, fierce and lusty with savage strength, and overflowing with the undegenerate vigour of animal life, from the contamination of their depraved captives, or from inglorious death in civil strife? Perhaps they might have shared the fate of the Vandals, who wandered through Spain into Africa, and losing their hardihood in the enervating climate, were at last annihilated by Belisarius; or, when carnage had thinned their numbers, and faction broken the bonds of ancient brotherhood, they might have become the prey of cruel and godless tyrants.

But suddenly, across this ferment of spirits, this chaos of passion, there came a whisper of strange import. A word was spoken, to which the wild-eyed warriors listened with wonder and curiosity; a word hitherto unblessed and unhonoured; a word so strange to the carnal nature that after eighteen hundred years of professed reverence it is hardly understood, still less obeyed;—Peace! The word fixed their attention by its strangeness; the primitive men



who had beheld unmoved the luxury of the Roman colonies, the colossal magnificence of the great city itself, stood still and hearkened to the tidings with the simple wonderment of children. We see in fancy the march of the wild tribes, as they gather like eagles round the body of the decaying empire, the long-haired, blue-eyed warriors brandishing their spears and shouting their war-songs, boasting of the foes they had slain, the conquests to which they were going—their wives and children sitting in rude carriages in the midst, carefully guarded as their dearest treasures, their vast herds of sheep and oxen driven by their bondmen. We hear the roar of voices, the tramp of the multitude, before which the degenerate tributaries of Rome shrink aghast, and leave a free road to the mass of huge-limbed, loud-voiced humanity, with its freight of undisciplined strength and passion and love.

Meanwhile some pale-browed, poorly-clad man of the despised ranks of the people slips secretly from the gate of a distant city, huddling in his breast a Greek writing ; and with peril and painful toil he reaches the confines of the Roman empire, and enters the land of the barbarian. And the word is spoken, and they



listen to it with ever-growing wonder. Peace—forgiveness—good will to men !

So little could their fierce and vengeful natures fathom the meaning of this doctrine of peace, that the early missionaries found it needful to reconcile them to the peaceful and gentle presence of the Redeemer by representing him as a rich and mighty monarch, and his twelve disciples as his twelve dukes of matchless valour and high descent ; and it was with such strange adjuncts as these that the Gospel found its way to the ears of the Saxons. Evidence of this is found in the Gospel of the ninth century, which was given to the world some years ago under the title of “*The He-liand.*” It tells how the great and mighty King, the Ruler of the Heavens, rides past the hill of Jericho with his host, and the blind men sitting at the road side ask what rich king is he who leads the multitude, whereupon a warrior in the crowd answers that it is Jesus Christ from the land of Galilee, the Master of the faithful, the Redeemer of the world.

In another place the same book gives a true image of the rude pomp in which the early German kings held their conferences with their dukes and nobles, in presence of the assembled



tribes. The passage runs somewhat in this manner—

“Nearer to the Ruler, the peaceful Child of God, stood the wise men whom he had chosen for himself; below them were encamped the host of the people. The faithful ones waited upon the word of their King; full of thought they awaited in silence the words which the Ruler of all people would give forth to the assembled multitudes. And the Shepherd of the land sat before them, God's only Child, to teach the people of the earth with His wise words. He sat there, and beheld them, and was silent, being moved with compassion in His heart, the Holy One; then He opened His mouth to those whom He had called to His council, and taught them who of all people on earth were the most acceptable to God: Blessed are those who are poor and humble in this world, for God will lead them into his green pastures, and give them eternal life in the fields of heaven.”

Yet, even with such arts as these, the early preachers of the Gospel might have failed to obtain a hearing, had not the new doctrine struck chords which vibrated deeply in the hearts of the untutored warriors. The new faith enforced truth, faithfulness, purity—virtues



which had been held up as the noblest qualities of manhood by the early mothers of the race, in the thick pine-woods and acorn-strewn forests of the North where the young giants were cradled.

We may believe too that it received the support of their women; for women were everywhere among the earliest believers and martyrs. The early Germans looked upon their women as their wisest counsellors and most valuable help-mates, and they treated them with a respect which formed a strong contrast to the barbaric traits which marked their dealings with men. Those who know how much women must have been doomed to suffer in those days through the vehement feuds, the flights or expulsions which were part of the life of each tribe, will not doubt that they were among the first to welcome the tidings of peace and forgiveness, and to plead with their fathers and husbands for the messengers of the Gospel. Before the end of the fourth century the West Goths had already advanced so far in Christianity that their bishop, Ulfila, found it advisable to make a complete translation of the Scriptures for their use.

When the long-watched-for moment arrived,



and the Goths poured over the Alps and seized upon Rome, they found Christian converts among their foes; a new bond of union arose amid the conflicts of tribes and parties, and the ruin and confusion of the dismembered empire. Christianity had already become an authoritative power. The Christian teachers raised their voices against the restless spirit, the wild havoc of the tribes; the doctrines gradually leavened the whole mass, and the ferment of passion and ambition abated.

Thus, after five hundred years of rapine and revolt, incursion and repulse, the blessings of order and justice fell once more upon the plains of Lombardy. The wild march of the hordes was stemmed. They gathered in reverence round the cross, built churches, and worshipped, restored cities, planted gardens and vineyards. Their hearts took root in the land made dear to them by the tidings of the faith; and their great king, Theodoric, founded upon the ruins of Rome the first Gothic kingdom of Italy.

But for centuries the old superstitions mingled with the new faith, and the heathen usages and traditions were cherished. The fiercer spirits banded themselves together, and went forth to



slay those who denied the newly-found Redeemer; the gentler natures, who had won something of the arts of the Latins, seized the pen and wrote down the legends and ballads of their northern birth-place, which were still vivid in the minds of their countrymen.

We know that in the ninth century the sagas and songs of the North were still held in remembrance by the christianized Germans; numberless rhymed traditions passed from mouth to mouth; the most important were committed to writing, and of these the cloister of Reichenau possessed twelve great poems in the year 821, of which not a fragment has survived; for the monks, fearing that the old traditions kept alive the heathen customs and the memory of the heathen gods, laboured zealously to destroy all oral and written records of the ancient days. Thus, with indiscriminating zeal, they destroyed with the chants in praise of Sachsnot the war-god, and the dark sentences which invoked supernatural aid, the most precious records of the early kings and heroes of the race. Even the parchment volume in which, as Eginhardt certifies, the most important records and sagas were written down by the order of Charlemagne, perished with the rest; for his son, Louis the



Good, being worked upon by his confessor, permitted it to be destroyed. That the Gudrunlied and the Nibelungenlied escaped the rage of this false and narrow zeal we may thank the faithful memory of the people, which preserved the ballads containing the subject matter of the great poems until they received at the hands of the men of the thirteenth century the rude but majestic garb in which we know them. Of the old Gothic and German records existing previously to the ninth century scarcely more have survived than may be counted upon the fingers; and of these the writer may be permitted to speak, as they are interesting as evidences of the moral and intellectual standing of the men of the time.

First in point of age and sanctity is the Gothic translation of the four gospels, generally known as the Silver Codex, part of the complete translation of the Bible by Bishop Ulfila before referred to. The venerable bishop, who died in the year 388 of the Christian era, completed with this great work his thirty-three years' labour as a teacher of the faith among the tribes of the West Goths. His people, who held the book in great reverence, took it with them on their migrations into Spain and Italy;



and it was read and understood as late as the ninth century ; but as the ancient tongue became lost in the Romance dialects, the manuscripts disappeared, and for six hundred years the only records of Ulfila's life and labours were to be found in writings of certain Greek fathers. Towards the end of the sixteenth century Arnold Mercator, a geometrician in the service of the Landgrave of Hesse, accidentally learned that a curious manuscript existed in the Abbey of Werden. It was brought to light, and upon examination proved to be the four gospels in Ulfila's translation. During the Thirty Years' War it fell into the hands of the Swedes, and ultimately came to Upsala. The letters, which were partly invented by Ulfila and partly derived from the Greek, are in silver upon a purple ground ; the volume has been bound in massive silver by the liberality of Marshal Lagardie. Two centuries later a fragment of the same work, the Epistles of the Apostle Paul, was discovered in the Lombard convent of Bobbio, by Cardinal Mai. Thus early had the good bishop inaugurated the work of the Reformers by giving a free gospel into the hands of the people. But the seed thus timely sown perished in the sterile soil



of Spain and Italy ; it lay dormant, seemingly dead, for ages in its native land ; but towards the end of the thirteenth century there were signs of awakening. The spirit of Ulfila spoke through Tauler, Huss, and Wickliffe ; and after a lapse of more than a thousand years the great work was resumed and completed on German soil by Martin Luther.

This fragment of Ulfila's, the purest and greatest example of the Gothic tongue, stands alone ; other fragments of early literature being sundered from it by a space of centuries. Among these rare and valuable waifs the Hildebrandslied, though a brief and broken story, claims pre-eminence from the dignity and rugged grandeur of its style. It tells how Hildebrand, the hoary armour-bearer of the favourite German hero, Dieterich of Bern, (Theodoric the Great), returning with his master to his native land after an enforced absence of thirty years in the land of the Huns, encounters his only son, Hadubrand, whom he had left a child at his mother's knee. He recognizes him and tells him that he is his father ; but the young man refuses to believe him, and answers his words of love with taunting defiance. Then Hildebrand loosens his golden armlets, the most



prized adornment of a Gothic warrior, and gives them to him as a proof of his love. The son receives them upon the point of his sword, and with bitter words dares him to the combat. "Thou art a crafty lying Hun," he says, "and dost offer me gifts that thou mayst find occasion to slay me unawares." In vain the old man seeks to pacify him. He dares him anew to the fight. A cry of anguish breaks from the hoary Hildebrand. "Woe is me !" he cries ; " thirty winters and summers I have dwelt among strangers, and now I must slay my only son or perish by his hand." But the fury of the warrior is kindled within him. He draws his sword and receives the attack of the young man. They fight until their shields are hacked to pieces ; but here, unluckily, the chronicle breaks off: the monks, who beguiled their leisure by writing the story on the fly leaves of a missal, seem to have been interrupted at this point, and never to have found leisure to resume the story. But the tradition, which seems to have been at one time common to all the northern races, survives in the Gaelic in the story of Cuchullin, and in a mediæval ballad of Caspar von der Roen ; in the former with a tragic end,



in the latter with a happy and rather humorous conclusion.

That the great beast-epic, Reinhardt the Fox, had become widely diffused as an oral tradition long before the ninth century seems to be proved by a piece of philological evidence; the modern French name for fox, "rénard," being derived from the Gothic word, "reginhardt" (the counsel-giver), while the old native word "goupil" is utterly forgotten. If the derivation be true, and there seems no reason to doubt it, the Franks must have carried the fable and the word with them over the Rhine, when they migrated into Gallia in the fifth century. To the ninth century likewise belongs that old Saxon version of the gospel to which reference was made above, and also a Latin version of the legend of Walther of Aquitaine, his flight with Hildegonda from the court of Attila, and his combat with the Burgundians in the passes of the Vosges mountains. Other writings, chiefly in Latin, and on sacred subjects, abound; and even translations of the comedies of Terence by a nun of Gandersheim, Roswirtha; but few and brief are the German historical relics which have yielded themselves to the zealous search of the learned. Towards



the close of the period the old songs and traditions seemed to have entirely vanished from books; and with them the names of the heroes and kings of ancient days.

Perhaps the good monks triumphed when they thought how utterly they had extirpated these dangerous memorials of heathendom. No doubt they had reasoned with the men, and prohibited the women, but they had taken no thought of wonder-loving childhood and garrulous old age. The old stories lived on in spite of penalties and prohibitions. While all written memorials were destroyed, or hidden and forgotten, when Charlemagne's brass-bound volume of stoutest parchment was of no avail, and heavy tomes fast chained to the lectern, or hoarded in chest and coffer, could not save them, these elves of poetry still lived on. They found shelter in the hearts and memories of the peasants, who, undistracted by travel and untroubled by new impressions, brooded tenaciously over the songs and stories of their forefathers. When they might no longer walk in stately guise with king and noble they hid themselves in lowly homes, in chimney-corners, by fire-lit hearths; and a large portion of them remained unknown and uncared-for by



the lettered world, until they were brought to light in our own day from the shielings of the Highlands and the scattered farm-steads of old Norway. Thus it is that in country places we come continually upon traces of the old time and the old faith, unwittingly kept alive by the simple folk. The Derbyshire people of a certain district deck their wells with flowers in May-time, not knowing that they pay homage to a long-forgotten heathen goddess. The Wensleydale yeomen tell a marvellous story about the origin of the beautiful Simmer Water, identical with that which the Hungarian peasants relate of Lake Balaton. And traces of still older superstitions are found in unexpected places, as when a group of rosy Cheshire children playing at the way-side with bits of broken crockery and ribbons, and wild-flowers, deck out a little space which they term a "Baal-house." So the wonder-loving soul of the child, which anticipates, and the faithful heart of the old, which loves to remember, kept the old traditions alive in spite of prohibitions and penalties until the beginning of the thirteenth century, when, with the religious outburst which attended the crusades, came a mental awakening which roused



men from the trance of inertness and usage; and by teaching them rightly to value themselves as individuals and a nation, taught them to set a right value on what remained to them of the early days of their forefathers.

To describe the nature of the sudden religious awakening which accompanied the first crusade would be a difficult task; the great cathedrals of the age are the best witnesses that real strength and depth of religious feeling animated a large portion of the men of that time. Each worked vigorously in his degree. The builder piled the mighty stones; the poet laboured with his pen; the warrior dared the perils of the sea, the rage of the Saracen. Slowly, year by year, generation after generation, arose those glorious structures which look down upon the pigmy works of modern facility with an unattainable calmness and grandeur. Truly has the poet said that the builders built their lives into the stones. What patience and love must have animated the souls of those workers who grew gray over their task, who shaped the stately porch, and pointed the arch, and raised the majestic columns, the soaring roof, the lofty towers, and beautified with skilful and tireless hands every corner of the beloved edifice, with



scroll and tracery, and trefoil and lily, and lighted the solemn gloom with hues of emerald, and sapphire, and onyx; and yet must die and leave the great work unfinished!

It is not without cause that the enthusiastic German scholars point to this thirteenth century as the golden age of their people; for in this age the cathedral of Mayence was built; the *Nibelungenlied* and the *Gudrunlied* were written, and Walther von der Vogelweide sang his noblest lays. In this age the veil which timorous religious bigotry had sought to cast over the traditions of the old time was rent with a powerful movement; the darkness clears, and from their long oblivion issue in stately order the terrible and majestic forms of the early heroes of the Germanic races. First come the kings of East Gothland of the race of the Amalungs, Hermanric and his nephew Dieterich of Bern (Theodoric the Great), whom the venerative spirit of the Goths had raised to a demi-god. In their train the tribe of the Wölfsings, faithful vassals and mighty warriors, their chief, the hoary master Hildebrand, the armour-bearer of Dieterich and companion of his thirty years' exile, and young Alphart, the pride of Gothic chivalry. Then



Attila, King of the Huns, the Scourge of God ; his wife, the noble and generous Helche ; the heroes of his court, and his royal hostages, Hildgonda and Walther of Aquitaine. Nigh to them the three hapless kings of Burgundy, Gunther, Giseler, and Gernot, in the prime of their youth and strength and beauty, little dreaming of the bloody end that woman's love and jealousy have woven for their proud young lives ; and the dark-browed amazon, Brunhilda, and the grim-faced, iron-handed Hagen von der Tronei, Gunther's vassal, Siegfried's murderer. Fierce as a tiger is Hagen, true as steel, pitiless as death. Well she knows it, she who stands in the midst in her lonely pre-eminence of woe and despair. Well she knows him who slew her glorious Siegfried at the forest well, and mocked her woe with cruel words, and outraged her queenly pride, and made her life ashes and dust. Deadly purpose gleams in her eye ; the serpent gnaws at her heart ; the milk of her woman's nature is turned into poison ; there will be no peace for her till the day of vengeance comes, and the arch-traitor Hagen, and the three young kings, her brothers, with the brave warrior-minstrel Volker, and Dankwart, and the flower of the Burgundian people, lie a stark and bloody heap of carnage on the great stair of Attila's hall.



And with them must fall that brave and matchless soul, who, as Wilmar finely says, "fought the double fight of the flesh and the spirit"—he whose faithful heart was pierced by the sword he had given to young Giseler as earnest of his love—Rüdiger the margrave of Bechlarn.

Among the records of these heroes are mingled songs and stories of happier days, of the Rose Garden of Kriemhilda, when she dwelt in the old city of Worms, and the comic stories of the monk Ilsan, Hildebrand's brother, who left his cloister to make up the number of the twelve knights who should fight for the crown of roses and Kriemhilda's kiss.

The plains south of the Alps yield heroes of renown of the kingly race of Lombardy, Rother and Ortnit, and Woldieterich, the wolf nursling, who laid down crown and sceptre in his old age to become a monk, and did a terrible penance in the minster aisle one cold winter's night, which turned his beard of iron-gray white as new washed wool. Lastly come the Danish and Frisian heroes of the Gudrun-*lied*, and the horizon changes from the fertile lands of south Germany, with the bounding line of the Alps or the Carpathians, to the



green flats that border the North Sea, the sandy island, the stormy frith ; and with the breeze that curls the tops of the dancing waves comes a milder and more genial atmosphere. The terrible image of Kriemhilda gives place to the gentle, but steadfast and noble Gudrun ; and Horand the warrior, ruler, and singer, shews how early on the sturdy truthful old northern stock southern courtesy and art were grafted, from which union sprang men, who, like Spenser and Sidney, outstrip our ideals. With them comes the king of the Hegelings, the brave and gentle Hetel ; his faithful kinsmen and vassals, Irolt, Frut, and Morung ; and the iron-handed, true-hearted Wat of Sturmland with the ell-long beard, and circlet of gold upon his furrowed brow. We have glimpses too of the early kings of Normandy and Ireland ; the crafty determined Ludwig, the choleric but generous Hagen, stand out in strong relief ; and the characters of the two mothers, Gerlinta and Hilda, roughly drawn, with big, careless strokes, yield as truthful a portraiture as the most highly-finished works of our own times. Nor must we forget Hartnut, with whom the chronicler divides our sympathy for King Herwig of Zealand, in a way which we should consider in a modern



writer as a proof of consummate art. Surely the Germans are right in pointing to this thirteenth century as the time of the highest development of the people ; for in this brilliant period are included the minnesingers, and those poets who, with higher artistic success, versified the romantic legends which lay outside their native bounds. From these well-known writers numerous works proceeded, such as the *Tristan* and *Isolt* of Gottfried of Strasburg, the *Parcival* of Wolfram von Eschenbach, the *Iwein* and *Eric* of Hartmann von der Aue, all derived from the old Welsh legends of King Arthur and his round table.

The *Gudrunlied*, which now demands our attention consists, in its original metrical form, of 1700 four-line verses, which are again divided into 32 "aventiuures" or cantos. The text is, without doubt, highly corrupted, and abounds in incongruities which have made it almost the despair of modern critics ; so that no two individuals ever arrive at exactly the same judgment respecting the value of the subject in dispute.

The reader who wishes to exercise his own judgment cannot do better, if he knows modern German, than refer to Simrock's translation of the poem. Those who read it for itself will be



satisfied; those who compare it with the original cannot fail to admire the skill of the translator, who, with a patient, dexterous hand, has disentangled the matted growth of centuries without disturbing that hoary dust of antiquity as perishable as the bloom upon the grape. Passages of great beauty and strength are not wanting in the original, though often choked up with much that is inferior and contradictory.\*

\* The following may perhaps be interesting to German scholars as a specimen of the original. The translation is nearly literal.

Die sô die rede hôrten die liefen balde dan.  
 Dem snellen Hartmut wart ez kunt getân.  
 bî im sâzen mêre sînes vater manne  
 dô sagete im einer mære, daz er ze Gûdrûnen gienge dannen.  
 Der sagete im offenlichen; "gebt mir daz boten brôt,  
 der schœnen Hilden tochter ir dienest in enbôt;  
 daz ir komen ruochet zuo ir kemenaten.  
 Sî wil iuch nimmer vremeden, si hat sich bezzer dinge sît  
 beraten."

Da sprach der ritter edele; "du liigest âne nôt  
 wære wâr dîn mære, ich gæbe dir boten brôt;  
 guoter bürge drîe und dâr zuo huobe rîche  
 und sehze bouge goldes, jâ wolte ich immer leben wünnich-  
 liche

Dô sprach ein sîn geselle: "ich hân ez ouch vernomen.  
 die gâbe wil ich teilen: ir sult zu hove komen.  
 ez sprach diu maget edele, daz sî iuch gerne minne  
 ob ir des geruochet, sî werde hie ze lande küniginne"  
 Hartmuot der sagete dô dem boten danc,  
 wie rehte vœelichen er von dem sedele spranc!



The fault of this lay, not in the language, but in the incompetency of the scribes, who were,

er wânde daz in minne hæte got berâten,  
mit vroelichem sinne gieng er zuo der meide kemenâten  
Dô stuont in nazzem hemde daz herliche kint,  
mit weinenden ougen gruozte si in sint.  
Sî gieng im hin engegene und stuont im alsô nâhen  
daz er mit sînen armen wolte Gudrunen um bevâhen  
Sî sprach : "Neinâ Hartmuot ! des entuot noch niht  
jâ wizent iûz die liute swer so daz ersiht  
ich bin ein armiu wescherin : ez mac in wol versmâhen  
ir sît ein künic rîche : wie zæme in mich mit armen ze um-  
bevâhen ?

Teh erlouben ez iu danne vil wol Hartmuot  
wann ich stên under krône vor iwern recken guot  
sô heize ich küniginne und sol iu niht-versmâhen  
sô zimt ez wol uns beiden, sô sult ir mich mit armen um-  
bevâhen."

In sînen grôzen zûhten er stuont ûf hôher dan,  
er sprach ze Gûdrûnen ; "maget vil wol getân,  
nu du mich ruochest minnen, ich wil dich hôhe mieten  
mir und mînen vriunden maht du, swaz dû selbe wilt,  
gebieten."

Dô sprach diu juncvrowe : "mir wart sanfter nie.  
Sol ich gotes armiu nû gebieten hie  
so ist mîn gebôt daz erste nach grôzer arbeits,  
ê daz ich hînt slafe daz man mir ein schoenez bat bereite."  
Mîn gebot daz ander daz sol dize sîn  
daz man mir balde bringe mîniu magedîn,  
swie man sî vinde under Gêrlinde wîben  
in ir pfieselgademe sol ir deheinin niht belîben."  
"Daz schaffe ich willichlich," sprach her Hartmuot  
dô suoht man ûz dem gademe manege maget guot,



most probably, set to patch together the medi-æval poem from the fragments of the antique

die mit strûbendem hâre unde in swachen kleiden  
 hin ze hôve giengen. die übele Gêrlint was unbescheiden.  
 Dô kamen drei und sehzie. dô Hartmuot sî sach,  
 Gûdrûn diu edele gezogenliche sprach ;  
 “Nû schowet, künic rîche : welt ir daz hân vür ere ?  
 wie sint erzogen die meide ?” er sprach “es geschiht in nim-  
 mer mære.”  
 “Tuot mirz ze liebe, Hartmuot,” sprach daz edele kint  
 “alle mîne meide, din hie verderbet sint  
 daz man sî bade hînte. Volget mîner ræte,  
 ir sult sî sehen selbe, daz sî stên in wünnichlicher wæte.”  
 Des antwurte Hartmuot, der ritter ûz erkorn,  
 “liebe mîn vrow Gûdrûn, ist iht der kleider vlorn,  
 diu mit in her brâhte iwer ingesinde  
 sô gibet man in diu besten diu man indert müge vinden.”  
 Dô wart gebadet schône diu herliche meid  
 mit ir juncvrouwen, diu aller besten kleit  
 diu ieman haben kunde brahte man in allen,  
 diu swachest dar under diu möhte einem küenege wol  
 gevallen.  
 Dô si gebadet wâren dô brâhte man in win,  
 daz in Ormanîe iht bezzer mohte sîn.  
 Mete den vil guoten brâhte man den vrouwen ;  
 wie esim gedanket würde, wie solte des her Hartmuot  
 getrouwen ?

## TRANSLATION.

Those who heard the speech ran quickly thence  
 It was made known to the swift Hartmut.  
 Some of his father's men sat with him  
 When one brought him tidings that he should go to Gudrun.  
 This spake to him openly, “Give me errand-bread ;



original. Let him who wishes to convince himself of the capabilities of the German tongue,

“Hilda’s fair daughter sends you her service ;  
That you shall deign to come to her in her chamber,  
She will be strange to you no longer ; she has thought  
better of it.”

Then spake the noble knight, “Thou liest without need ;  
If thy message were true I would give thee errand-bread,  
Three good burgs and rich lands to boot,  
And sixty gold pieces ; and (for) I should always live in  
bliss.”

Then spake his comrade, “I likewise heard it ;  
Your gifts I would share ; you shall come to court,  
The noble maid said that she would love you willingly.  
If you deign she will become your queen.”

Hartmut gave thanks to the messengers :  
How joyfully he sprung from the seat !  
He deemed that God had granted him love.  
With cheerful heart he went to the maid’s chamber.  
The noble child stood there in her wet shift ;  
With weeping eyes she greeted him,  
And went to meet him, and stood so near  
That he sought to put his arms round Gudrun.  
She spake, “Nay, Hartmut, do not that,  
Those who see it will hold it unworthy of you ;  
I am a poor washing-maid, it is a disgrace to you ;  
You are a rich king. Is it seemly that you embrace me ?  
I will allow it willingly, Hartmut,  
When I wear the crown before your good knights ;  
When I am called queen, and am not too mean for you ;  
Then it will beseem us both that you embrace me.”  
In his great modesty he stepped farther back ;  
He spake to Gudrun, “Fair maiden,



even in those early days, read the opening verses of another old poem, "The Death of Alphart,"

Now that thou deignest to love me, I will repay thee well,  
Thou may'st command of me and my friends whatsoever  
thou wilt."

Then spake the maid : " I never was more glad of heart.

If I, God-forsaken one, shall command here,

Then my first wish, after my great troubles, is,

That a fair bath be prepared for me before I go to sleep.

My next command shall be this,

That my maids be brought to me with speed,

And be sought out from Gerlinta's women ;

None of them shall remain further in her work-room."

"That will I do gladly," spake Sir Hartmut.

Then they sought in the chambers the noble maids,

Who came to court with unkempt hair

And in poor garments, Gerlinta was so shameless.

Then came three-and-sixty. When Hartmut saw them,

Gudrun, the noble one, spake to him gently,

"Now, behold, noble king, do you call this honour ?

How are the maids treated ?" Then he spake, "It shall  
not happen again to them."

"Do it for love of me, Hartmut," spake the noble child,

"All my maids who are here in such sorry plight,

Let baths be prepared for them. Follow my counsel,

And you shall see yourself in what comely guise they will  
appear."

To this Hartmut answered, the chosen knight,

"Gudrun, my beloved lady, if the clothes are lost

Which your women brought with them here,

The best shall be given to them that can be found."

Then the glorious maid was bathed with her women ;

And the best clothes that any could possess



which, without the aid of metaphor, and with a limited diction, display a dignity, breadth, and force which are wonderful. "Deeds, not words," was the motto of the northern races ; and when they laid down sword and javelin, and began their artistic career, their hands shaped out their fancies more deftly with hammer and chisel than with the pen. Had they bestowed upon the Nibelungenlied the pains and finish bestowed upon their great churches, it would have been the worthy rival of the Iliad.

Perhaps the first consideration which suggests itself to the reader who enters upon the study of old German poetry, is the striking contrast of effect produced upon his mind by the Gudrunlied and the Nibelungenlied, a contrast more remarkable because of the mental identity of many of the characters. Thus, Gudrun's constancy and love to Herwig find their parallel in Kriemhilda's passionate devotion to Siegfried ;

Were brought to them all.

The poorest among them might have pleased a king.

When they had bathed, they brought them wine,

Than which was no better in Normandy ;

Good mead they brought to the women :

How should Hartmut know what thanks he would get for  
it ?

*Gudrun*, A. Schott, 1288 to 1305.



Hagen of Tronei and Wat of Sturm-land shew the same dogged faithfulness and fierce valour ; the noble and valiant Horand has his counterpart in the fearless, joyous Volker. Yet, while the characters in Gudrun win themselves a place in our affections, the personages of the Nibelungenlied hold us aloof, and inspire us with feelings of awe and wonder akin to those we felt in childhood when reading some woeful story of the sorrows and dangers of the world of which we knew so little. If we try to account for the overpowering effect which the first reading of the Nibelungenlied produces, we shall find that it is not the greatness of the scenes and deeds represented ; not the boundless love of Kriemhilda, the superhuman prowess of Siegfried, the savage faithfulness and ruthless obedience of Hagen. It is the sad and stern spirit of the old heathenism which sways the nominally Christianized poem ; it is this which gives the ground tone to the long requiem, and breaks forth in swelling, sighing chords, and gathers strength until the tale of woe is ended. The spirit of the old creed still rules the destinies of the heroes ; the melancholy which has wormed its way into our advanced forms of Christian faith mingles its bitterness even with the



opening lines, put into the mouth of the tender and lovely maiden :—

“Es ist an manegen wîben vil dicke worden schîn  
Wie liebe mit lîde zu jungest lonen kan.”\*

And in the closing lines, when the day of stormy tears is past, and the blood-red sunset fades in night of blackest woe, the same spirit seems to hover near, and speaks with sad triumph :—

“Diu vil michel êre was dâ gelegen tôt  
Die liute heten alle jâmer unde nôt,  
Mit leide was verendet des küniges hochzît  
Als je diu liebe lîde ze aller jungiste gît.”†  
Nibelungenlied, 1 Aven. 17.

But in the Gudrunlied the doctrines of the Christian faith have become living truths ; men have learned to value the human lives for which is reserved a higher destiny than war and wassail in Odin’s halls, until the wolf shall come and swallow up the world. The womanly heart, in Gudrun, has drunk in the blessed doctrines

\* In many a woman’s fate it hath been made manifest how love at last will repay with woe.

† What honour was laid low then !  
The folk had wailing and grief ;  
In sorrow ended the king’s great feast,  
For love at the last brings woe.’

Nibelungen, 39 Aven. 55.



of peace and forgiveness; the despairing and dangerous maxim of the old faith, "aus freude leid," "from joy is woe," gives place to the deep and consoling saying, whose truth is dimly realised here, but whose perfect fulfilment is stored up for the after life, "out of sorrow comes joy."

The heathen spirit is still shewn in Wat of Sturmland, but his outbursts of savage fierceness only serve as a foil to the scenes of peace and reconciliation which follow. The poem derives a deep interest from the fact that it depicts the Danes just at the epoch when their native virtues had become strengthened and ennobled by the influences of the Christian faith; and so strikingly is this worked out in the final scenes, that one might suspect them of having been written for the purpose.

In the consideration of Gudrun the question of locality is one of great interest. The researches of Grimm and others have led to the conclusion that Friesland and the countries lying north—in general terms those between Jutland and the Scheldt—were the home of Hetel and his feudatories. These lands were held by the Danes and allied tribes in the ninth century, at which period the same people occu-



pied the north of England and part of the south of Ireland. Sturmland may be the Stormarn district in which Hamburg lies; the Danemark or Teneland which Horand governed was probably part of the Denmark of to-day. Various suggestions have been made with regard to Moorland and Zealand—the latter has been identified with the province of Zealand; but as there are neither dates nor history to bear out this and other conclusions, the reader must not pin his faith too strictly to them. The localities of greatest interest to English readers, *Waleis* and *Ballyghan*, have afforded a wide field for speculation. The orthography has led to the supposition that *Waleis* might be *Wales*, but this seems to be contradicted by passages in the poem; the *Isle of Wight* has been suggested by *San Marte*, who does not however bring any evidence to support his idea. With regard to *Balyan*, or *Baljan*, Grimm has pointed out that the *Ballyghan* of our day is identical in sound with the name of *Hagen's burg*; but, as there is no haven bearing that name at the present time, conjecture must stop short here. The strongest proofs in favour of the prevalent belief that the *Hegelings'* land lay near the western mouth of the *Scheldt* is found in the



allusions to the aspects of nature contained in the poem, which coincide exactly with the physical features of the Netherlands. We read of the "wild sand," the "werder" or island, the sandy beach, and are told on more than one occasion that the heroes sprang from their ships neck-deep into the flood, which points to shallow sandy shores that do not permit the near approach of vessels. A sandy island bearing the name of Wulpen still lies near the mouth of the Scheldt; and in the Isle of Cadsant is another Wulpen, where a Benedictine cloister stood as late as the sixteenth century. These traces afford pretty strong probabilities, but the want of accurate data, and the great physical changes which have taken place in the localities, have rendered nearer identification impossible. Since the days of Tacitus the irruptions of the sea have entirely changed the coast line, have buried the Pillars of Hercules, swallowed up the river Flevus and its adjacent Roman fortress, and submerged a large tract of country formerly occupied by the Frisians.

It follows, therefore, that the outfalls of the great river have undergone corresponding changes since the date of the story. The names Matalan, Cassian, and Campatilla are held by critics as



interpolations of the various workers upon the poem. There was certainly in ancient times a town of Metelen on the Vecht, but as it lay inland it cannot possibly be identified with Hetel's burg.

The literary evidence in favour of the genuineness of the Gudrunlied as a tradition is much stronger than the local, for it shews that the chief personages of the story were well known to the northern nations before the thirteenth century. The story of the fight at Waleis is found, with such alterations of name as are inevitable in an oral tradition, in the Edda of the Icelander Snorro, which dates from the beginning of the thirteenth century. It is called there the Battle of the Hiadnings, and is drawn, like the rest of the poems, from old ballads or tales. This Icelandic version relates how King Hedin invades the land of King Högni while the latter is away at the great council of the kings, and carries off his fair daughter Hilda. Högni pursues the ravisher and overtakes him at the Island of Hoy in the Orkneys. Hilda beseeches her father to make peace, and offers him a necklace as a token of love; he refuses the gift, and bids her go back; upon which Hedin himself sues for peace, and offers gold as an atonement.



"Too late," answers Högni. "I have bared the sword Dainsleif, which costs a human life each time it is unsheathed, and gives wounds that can never be healed."

Thereupon they begin to fight, and fight until sundown, when the darkness compels them to retire to their ships. Hilda, by magic arts, calls the dead back to life, and mends the broken weapons: the fight begins again at sunrise and lasts until night; again the dead are raised and the weapons renewed; and so on, day after day, and night after night—and this is the Battle of the Hiadnings which the old songs say is going on yet, and shall last until the Day of Doom.

Saxo Grammaticus tells a similar story in his pseudo-history of the North, which was written before the year 1200 of the Christian era; and further and more distinct traces of the heroes of the Gudrunlied are found in the following lines taken from the poem of Alexander, written by the priest Lamprecht after a French model, somewhere about the year 1180.

Von einem Volcwigē hōre wir sagen  
der ûf Wulpinwerde geschah  
dār Hilden vater tōt lach  
inzwischen Hagenen unde Waten.\*

---

\* We heard of a great fight which chanced upon the Wulpensand  
When Hilda's father lay dead between Hagen and Wat.



Immediately after Herwig's name is brought in to heighten the praise of Alexander's valour ; so that we have all the leading warriors of the poem, but in altered relations to each other. The fame of Horand's minstrelsy had reached the Anglo-Saxons, if we may trust a passage found in the Anglo-Saxon MS. of the eighth century, known as the "Traveller's Song."

An old English ballad also relates how incomparably a certain minstrel, Horn, touched the harp-strings before the king's daughter Ermenhilda. In many later poems Horand is brought forward as an example of the might of song, as Solomon of wisdom, and Absalom of beauty. "Had I Solomon's wisdom, David's might, Absalom's beauty," says an old German poem of the thirteenth century, "could I bring forth sweet tones like Horand." "Horand did not sing a third part as sweet as he," says another old ballad ; and in the War on the Wartburg (Tannhäuser) the poem tells how Wolfram of Eschenbach stood before the noble company "like Horand before Queen Hilda." The names of Ludwig, Hartmut, Hiltburga, and other personages of the Gudrunlied, are brought forward in the poem of Biterolf ; and there are traces of the tradition in the Parcival of Wolf-



ram von Eschenbach. In the curious old poem of Morolf, Horand's power of song is likewise alluded to; and Wat of Sturmland is met with again in the Rolandslied, where Charlemagne discourses with Ogier the Dane. He says, "I trust thee well Sir Ogier; thou art kinsman to Wat; hast the heart of a lion, and art strange to falsehood."

These are the main written proofs which the industry of German critics has been able to collect. Whether the Gudrunlied was founded partly on real events, or whether the poet found the germ of the story in the carrying off of Helen, which is derived from the story of Demeter and Persephone, supposed in its turn to be a rendering of the myth of the strife of the seasons, will probably be a matter of subordinate interest to general readers. There can be no doubt that the poem had its origin in widely-spread traditions of heathen times, and that the Christian element was added at a later period.

Whatever be the sources from which the story is derived, the poet has known how to give his personages the stamp of reality, by investing them with those fine personal traits which are hard to seize, and impossible to



invent. It is curious to recognise among these heroes of a thousand years ago features of character which still prevail among that portion of the British population which is of Norse extraction. To begin with a homely subject, but one which a popular proverb associates with the highest attribute of human nature, one sees in what high esteem cleanliness is held. The poem mentions more than once, how, after battle, the warriors washed the harness-stains from their brows and limbs before they went into the presence of the women ; and the thrifty Norman queen (who, we must bear in mind is of the same stock as her bitter foes, the Danes), sees to it herself that her garments are well rubbed and bleached. The same thoroughness marks Gudrun's speech to Gerlinta when the latter bids her wash, "Let me be taught," she says, "that I may bend my body to the work. I would gladly learn to do it well, that I may earn my bread therewith."

And her first request to Hartmut (it seems a strange one to modern ideas of delicacy, but the poet relates it with as much emphasis as he bestows on the most touching scenes), is, that she and her women may have baths prepared ; and further on, when Hartmut is taken from



his dungeon, we read that the same luxury is granted to him by Gudrun's express commands. Is it a great stretch of fancy to believe that the intense love of cleanliness which marks the people of the Netherlands and those of Yorkshire is a feature of character inherited from their Danish forefathers?

The resemblance does not stop here. If we open the pages of Currer Bell we find in her Yorkshire characters the same mixture of deep feeling and shrewdness, rough speech and strong affections, generosity and thrift, which marks the characters of the Danish heroes of Gudrun; and that intense love of music which led them to invest their warrior-minstrel Horand with the magic powers of Orpheus, still survives among the natives of the moorland towns and villages. But music is not with them the voluptuous pastime of idle hours, the venal servitor of the feast or the dance. She is a priestess, sublime and austere, and if she no longer chant the daring deeds of field and flood, the Viking's death in storm and flame, she has taken up the nobler theme of the triumphs of faith and sacrifice, and the mysteries of immortality. Within a circle of twenty miles of Haworth may be found some of the best chorus singers in the



world, hard-working men and women some of them, who can sing every note of the Messiah blindfold, plain-visaged, rough-spoken people, who after a week of toil will get up before day-break on a Sabbath morning, and climb two or three miles up a steep hill side that they may sing Mozart's Gloria in Excelsis while the lark is rising. When the greatest sacred composer of this century came to them, disheartened by the sneers or cold half-praise of free-thinking salon critics, who were utterly incapable of raising themselves to the height of his pious inspirations, he found among these rough and untaught people the deep and reverential appreciation he desired ; and left his testimony of it by dedicating one of their choral unions to his great psalm, "When Israel came out of Egypt."

The rough speech and faithful heart are nowhere shewn more strongly than in the scene where Hetel breaks the proposed Irish voyage to Wat of Sturmland. The old warrior bursts out into wrath that Frut should have planned so perilous a scheme. No lip loyalty, no smooth excuses or dexterous expedients for him. And Hetel hears his speech without surprise or doubt ; for let Wat of Sturmland chafe and storm as he may, he knows that he is not



the less ready to risk his limbs or life at a word from his young master. The bond of relationship between them, uncle and nephew, was held peculiarly sacred among the Germanic races; according to Tacitus as much so as the filial relationship. Wat of Sturmland had been to Hetel faithful as a father; unselfish as a mother; the stout guardian of his rights, the careful steward of his wealth. But not the less is the remnant of his honoured days the king's; and if the fair-faced, light-hearted youth but raise his finger and point the way, his armour is put on, his sword girded round him, and his furrowed brow set cheerfully towards the unknown peril, whether it be from the hand of the foe, or the wrath of the sea.

This loyalty to the king or chief is strikingly shewn in an incident in the poem of *Wolfdieterich*, identical with a well-known Gaelic story. *Berchtung*, the faithful squire of *Wolfdieterich*, leads his sons with him into the fight; one after another falls beneath the arrows of the foe, and as *Berchtung* notes each fall he turns to his beloved master with a smile and cheering word, fearing lest his woeful face should betray how ill his warriors fared. On the other hand, the faithfulness of the king towards his vassals



has its most shining example in the scene where Kriemhilda summons her brothers to deliver up their vassal, the hated Hagen von der Tronei, promising that she would spare their lives. "No," they answer, "we will die with Hagen!" Wealth and lands may go, and love and life; but faith must be kept between the king and his followers. "We will die with Hagen; and if we were a thousand." In those early days the bond between king and people had something of the homeliness and warmth of a domestic relation. The state held together and worked by family ties. The people felt for their king the love and devotion of children; the king was bound to shield them and care for them, even to the lowest. In fact they had scarcely emerged from a state of clanship. While Hetel rules in person at Matalan he exercises through his kinsmen of the Hege-lings a kind and fatherly influence in the remotest part of his domains; the thought of his deputies is not how they shall enrich themselves, but how they shall uphold the love and honour of the family in the hearts of the people. The rulers and the ruled are as yet narrowly bound together by the fellowship of similar feelings, and language, and needs. A high



state of luxury had not created artificial modes of life, separating the favoured few from the multitude. Yet this simplicity did not preclude greatness as a nation, as Tacitus shews in the following passage. "Of all the German nations they are beyond doubt the most estimable. Their greatness rests upon the surest basis, the love of justice ; wanting no extension of territory ; free from avarice and ambition, remote and happy, they provoke no wars, and never seek to enrich themselves by rapine and incursion. Loving moderation, yet uniting to it a warlike spirit, they are ever ready to unsheath the sword in a just cause. Their armies are soon in the field. In men and horses their resources are great, and even in time of peace their fame is never tarnished."\* This passage refers to the Chaucians who occupied in the writer's day the lands lying between the Ems and the Elbe, and are therefore looked upon by some critics as the ancestors of the Hegelings. Possibly the Danes had become mixed with the native tribes, just as in our own country they became blended with the Saxons after their conversion to Christianity. It would seem from the fact that Frut and Horand are spoken

\* "Manners of the Germans," xxxv.



of emphatically as Danes, and that Horand's domains are called Daneland, that the Hege-lings were not exclusively Danish. The reader will probably ask how a people praised by Tacitus as being "free from avarice and ambition" came to set such a high value upon gold. It certainly jars with our ideas that warriors on the eve of battle should be fired by promises of gold, and that the Redeemer in the Heliand should be extolled as a rich man. But in the early times set before us, the possession of wealth inferred, before all other things, the means of winning honour, the power and the will to do good. Gold had not then become a source of estrangement between class and class, a means of pampering the body and creating spurious needs, and breeding in the heart a narrowing soul-destroying indifference or contempt for those who do not hold the talisman. The warriors desired gold because it represented to them the blessings of the needy and forsaken, the prayer of the widow, the love of the orphan, the honour and dignity of the "gold-spender," the "ring-giver," titles frequently used in old poems to designate the king or chief, shewing that generosity was held to be a royal attribute. Charity in giving seems to have



been a native German trait; and the precepts of the Christian faith exalted it into a high virtue. We see that they had noted the deficiency of certain Eastern nations in this respect from a passage in the poem of King Ortnit, which tells that his heathen bride from the East had to be instructed carefully in the excellence of generosity.

We trust that enough has been brought forward to satisfy the reader that the beautiful story, if it be not true to history, is at least true to humanity; and that there is some evidence in favour of its truth as a tradition. Before quitting the subject finally the character of the heroine demands attention. No better proof of the high esteem in which the ancient Germans held women can be found than this portraiture of Gudrun. From the first scene with Herwig, in which with such firmness and modesty she takes her fate into her own hand, to her last, tender, parting words to her mother, she shews unfailing dignity, gentleness, and wisdom. She possesses the noblest qualities of heart and brain; and it is not too much to say that she deserves to be ranked with the finest creations of Shakespeare. The only moment in which she apparently descends from her



elevation is when she flings Gerlinta's garments into the sea. A poet of our own day would probably have suppressed this incident as derogatory to the heroine. The old rhyming chronicler (for he was probably no more), suffered it to stand, and left us in it the strongest voucher for the truth of the portrait. This bit of characteristic feminine vengeance brings the heroine down to the level of humanity; we feel assured that she was really a creature of flesh and blood, and love her all the more. The transition from calm and silent endurance to proud defiance seems rather abrupt, but it is not difficult to explain.

At the sight of her brother and her betrothed husband, the remembrance of her royal birth, and her former happiness, awakens within her. The work which had been almost welcome in the years of fruitless waiting now appears odious and degrading; she will not endure the thrall of Gerlinta a moment longer, but flings away her proud humility with her bitter task, and steps forth filled with new life and energy. And while her liberators are busy without, she plays her part within the burg, using the artifice which the women of her race knew how to employ at critical moments. By her seem-



ing compliance she throws the men off their guard (her foe, Gerlinta, reads the riddle too late), and lessens the number of warriors in the burg by sending a hundred of them forth to bid the wedding guests. It is only at this moment, while her fate is uncertain and the lives of her kinsmen at stake, that we see a reminiscence of the heathen woman in Gudrun ; when the hour of triumph is come it finds her, like all noble natures, compassionate and placable, and she shines forth again as the type of christianized womanhood. Yet certain German critics strive against the softer features of her character, and affirm that they are spurious traits laid on by the hands of monkish scribes. They reject it as an incongruity, that she who had smarted in bonds and shame, whose bereavement and captivity were caused by Gerlinta, should strive to shield her from the hand of the avenger ; and they strike out as spurious the passage in which she tells Wat of Sturm-land that Gerlinta is not in the chamber. "The genuine Gudrun," says a recent critic, "is strong and proud in love and hate. Her betrothed and her mother are not dearer to her than revenge." Wilmar on the other hand extols the loving and unselfish nature shewn in the



scene in which she hears the tidings from her native land. Her first question is, "Lives Hilda yet? and my brother, young Ortwin?" and she goes through the circle of her well-beloved, eager to know if death has spared them. "And no word of her deliverance!" says Wilmar. The critic before alluded to finds Wilmar's judgment very superficial here, and wonders that he cannot perceive the motive of her questions. She is eager to know if they live, that she may feel assured of vengeance; for she knows that her kinsmen will visit her wrongs upon the Normans. So thinks the critic, who would fain shape from the rough and careless touches with which Gudrun's character is indicated, a figure that should claim sisterhood with Clytemnestra and Kriemhilda. But if the heroine has been too hardly dealt with by this stickler for the severe and antique, she has found compensation in the kinder judgment of Gervinus, who is charmed with her gentle and graceful attributes. He particularly extols her virtue, pointing out what a struggle may be supposed to have taken place between her duty to her betrothed husband and her admiration for Hartmut, who had saved her life. This idea may probably find a response in the minds



of readers possessed with the ideas of modern romance ; and there is no reason why they may not fill out the blanks the word-grudging chronicler has left up and down his pages, according to their own fancy. Certainly there is no proof that such a struggle took place. Gudrun had been reared in no soft school of sentiment. Obedience to parents, faithfulness to her word, reverence for the ties of blood, had been held up to her as an iron law. Before marriage the maiden belonged to her parents, and seems to have had little freedom of intercourse with the other sex, or choice with regard to her husband ; though in the case of Hilda and Gudrun the barriers were spurned and their life's destiny settled by their own choice. After marriage the arduous duties devolving upon women, of which even queens had their share, left little room for coquetry or vanity. Spinning and sewing, providing for the family and the out-door dependants, the rearing and tending of children, tamed down any vagrant fancies ; and that a woman's heart or eye should wander was a thing almost unheard of. Any conscious effort of virtue seems far from Gudrun's thoughts. She looks upon her betrothed as her husband. The word was spoken, the kiss given, and



henceforth there could be no husband in the world for her save him who had received her plighted troth. Gudrun's companions are, with one exception, as steadfast as herself. How gravely a breach of faith towards kin and country was looked on, even in a woman, is shewn in the terrible punishment which Wat of Sturmland visits upon Hergart.

And now the writer must leave the little narrative in the hands of the reader, in the hope that he may find something in this old story newly told which may kindle love and reverence for the forefathers of our race.

The green barrow, the ring of gray stones, are all that survive of them, save such memorials as this ; they who framed in their rude huts the noblest code of laws, and ploughed, compassless, the stormy north seas, and felled the tangled forest, and tilled the barren moor where now the swarming city stands, and the Giant Steam bears man's burden, and the lightning flashes his thoughts from realm to realm.



*The Chronicle of Gudrun.*









## CHAPTER I.

### *Of King Hetel's fair Daughter.*

IN old times there lived in the land of the Hegelings, which lay on the shores of Friesland, a mighty King, Hetel by name, who had wedded the daughter of Wild Hagen, King of Ireland. To this noble couple was born a daughter whom they called Gudrun, and so fair was she, and of such gracious bearing, that the old felt young again when they looked upon her, the sad-hearted learned to smile, and the roughest grew gentle in her presence. While she was but a child in years the fame of her beauty spread to many lands, and kings and nobles of high degree sent to entreat her hand in marriage. But King Hetel was haughty, and his wife Queen Hilda still prouder of heart; and wooer after wooer was sent away from the Castle of Matalan, often with words of discourtesy and scorn; and these rejected ones vowed vengeance against King Hetel. Some even threatened him in his own hall; but Hetel recked little of their threats, deeming himself beyond power of harm in his strong burg at



Matalan, and in truth there was no richer nor mightier king than he.

His cellars and vaults were stored to the ceilings with gold and precious wares from Abalie : his chests and coffers were filled with ermine and miniver, robes of silver tissue, webs of gold cloth, costly garments of silk and velvet, and veils of richest device, with which Hilda and her women covered themselves when they walked abroad. His land was fruitful and his people happy ; he had ships on the sea and many strong castles on the land ; and he knew, moreover, that with his five faithful vassals and their men at his back, he could defy the utmost rage of his foes. These chiefs were Horand of Daneland, Frut and Irolt, Morung of Nifland, and Wat the Earl of Sturmland. They were his near kinsmen ; they had sworn fealty to him as their king, and love to him as a brother ; and had shown their loyalty in many a bloody fight and dangerous fray. Wisely they ruled their wide lands in his name, coming three times a year to Matalan to do him homage ; and receiving at the hands of Hetel and his wife the love and graciousness which they had earned by the service of many years.

To the eldest of these five chosen men, Wat, Earl of Sturmland, Hetel had given his son Ortwin in charge ; and Ortwin dwelt with him in his burg at Sturmland, and Wat led him to hunt the bear and wolf in the pine-woods ; taught him the use of the spear and bow ; and fenced with him daily in the court



yard, so that Ortwin got great skill and strength in the use of the sword, the spear, and battle-axe, and gave promise, even before his beard was grown, that he would be as mighty a warrior as his grandsire, Wild Hagen.

There had been peace in the land for many years ; harvest-time was at hand, and the folk gathered the corn with great rejoicing. Hetel and his wife Hilda sat at the window of the great hall in their burg at Matalan to see the sheaves borne home ; the land teemed with fruits and grain to the very water's edge, and, even while they gazed, the King's ships from Norway sailed into the haven bearing merchandise and rich gifts. Their hearts grew glad within them at sight of the plenty and riches, and at last Hetel spoke his thoughts aloud.

“ Behold this goodly land, the fair city that lies around us, the fields rich with harvest, the pine forests upon the hills which give us wild boars for the chase and venison for our board, and the timber strong and stout of which our stately ships are built ! For sixteen years the harvests have overflowed ; the poorest have grown fat ; the swine have feasted on grain, and he who would not work has lived idly on the abundance of others. For sixteen years death has kept from our door, and the foe from our gate. Truly we have prospered beyond measure since I won thee in fight from thy father Hagen. Those who taught me in childhood, who



tilted and hunted, with me in youth, my friends and kinsmen, well proved in troublous times, stand around me yet in an unbroken band, strong and faithful to the end. Swift is Horand in fight, like the light-bolt that falls on the Forest of Givers! Wise and patient is Frut in counsel! Sturdy and true is Irolt of Ortland. Morung is a warrior without reproach. Wat of Sturmland is worth a kingdom. Age has not quenched his valour, nor dimmed his faith. The strongest of our young men cannot hold their ground against the graybeard, and who can excel him in wisdom and cunning? By the rood, if he would have taken a crown at my hands I would have made him king long ago! More than all these, God has given us two beloved children, Ortwin who is as brave as his grandsire Wild Hagen, and Gudrun, the world's wonder of a fair maid. Now mark me Mistress Hilda, the maid is worthy of a Kaiser, so fair and wise is she, so skilled in tapestry and all womanly labours. Her hand must not be given to the first chance wooer, but to a great king who is worthy of us and our estate."

To this the queen answered :

"Truly I am of your mind. Our daughter is comely beyond all other women; and moreover, so gentle and obedient, that from childhood she has never thwarted our will in aught that concerned her; but has submitted herself to us with great humility, making herself thereby an ensample to all young



maids about the court. Neither does her fancy run upon garments and jewels, and those things wherewith foolish maids waste their time and grieve their elders; but she esteems housewifery, thrift, diligence, and learning, beyond all other things; and those who see her works marvel at her wisdom and patience. He who weds Gudrun will have his house and honour in safe keeping. It is meet that we should choose her a husband; but to what prince of our neighbours shall we give her? In Zealand, Friesland, and Norway, there lives not one who is worthy of our child. She would find a fitting mate only in some Kaiser of the south, mighty as Attila of the Huns."

Scarcely had the Queen made an end of speaking, when one knocked loudly at the outer gate; and the warden brought tidings that Siegfried, King of Moorland, with his knights, stood without, asking for shelter.

Hetel bade them right welcome, and they rode into the court with great noise of hoofs and clash of steel; so that Gudrun heard the tumult in her chamber, and went to her window, marvelling who the new comers might be. A warrior of noble stature with a dark visage rode first; and she perceived by his crest and the gold-plated armour he wore that he was a king. Siegfried had come with his men from the weary wars in Icaria; he had been sorely wounded, and was heart-sick of the strife; and he had come thither with intent to wed the fair maid of the Hegelings and lead her



home to dwell in peace in his father's house ; but this Hetel wist not, or he would not have suffered him to enter his door.

Hetel made great cheer for the strangers, and feasted them in the hall ; and the Hegelings tilted daily with them in the court-yard ; and Siegfried shewed himself a warrior of worth and valour, and won praise from all the Hegelings. His squires moreover told Gudrun's women of his mighty deeds and noble birth ; how he ruled over seven lesser kings in his own land, and possessed great riches ; and the maid began to look upon him with good-will for the sake of his fair speech and noble mien, albeit she loved him not ; being coy and timid even beyond the manner of maids. When the twelfth day was ended Siegfried went before the King to declare his errand.

"Hearken, King Hetel," he said, "give me Gudrun to wife, she is worthy to wear my crown, and rule over my lands."

"God forbid," answered Hetel, "that I should send my child to your wild shores ! her mother would pine for her ; and I should have to journey a year over sea and land ere I could behold her face. Go choose a wife among your neighbours. Gudrun is not for you."

This answer vexed Siegfried beyond measure ; for now he would have to go home wifeless, and brook the gibes and jeers of his companions, for that he had



ridden so far to woo King Hetel's daughter, and got only his journey for his pains. But there was no help for it ; so he called his men together and rode away from Matalan, swearing bitter dole to the stiff-necked king of the Hegelings.







## CHAPTER II.

### *How the Norman Messengers came to Matalan.*

ERE long, merchants journeying to Normandy carried the fame of Gudrun's beauty thither ; and the fame of the maid's goodness and comeliness reached the ears of Gerlinta, wife of Ludwig king of Normandy. Now Gerlinta had one son, Hartmut by name, whom she loved with surpassing love. She had long desired that he should wed ; and now when she heard how all the folk extolled the maid of the Hegelings, she fixed upon her as a fitting wife for him. Hartmut was as brave a youth as ever sailed the north seas ; of comely presence likewise, and kingly bearing. His body was tall, and straight as a Norway pine ; his red-gold hair hung in thick curls upon his shoulders ; he was gentle of speech, ardent of temper, strong in love, in hate, and constancy.

From boyhood he had loved to seek danger upon the sea or in the chase, and he cared naught for women, esteeming love only a pastime for the weak. Nevertheless, when his mother told him that it was meet he should choose a wife for the people's sake, he



hearkened to her ; chiefly because he knew that the road to Gudrun's love was beset with peril and doubt, for it had been rumoured through the lands that Hetel held no man worthy of his daughter's hand. So he sought his father, and told him how he had a mind to wed the maid of the Hegelings, and would straightway ride to the Hegelings' land ; but the old king would hear naught of it.

"She may be the fairest of the fair, the pearl of earth," said Ludwig, "but she shall be no daughter of mine. Choose a wife from our neighbours, there will be less time lost in wooing, and thou wilt not need to risk thy neck on the long and perilous journey."

Hartmut, who was as dutiful as a young child, would have followed his father's counsels, but Gerlinta had set her mind on Hetel's maid, and would not be said nay.

"Let us send messengers with courteous letters," she said, "and they will tell us truly if Hetel's daughter be as fair as men say, and if she be meet for our son."

"Not so wife," said Ludwig ; "you know how Hetel stole away her mother Hilda from Ireland, how Wild Hagen pursued him, and slew the Hegelings at Waleis ; yea, how he had nearly slain Hetel himself. I fought with Hagen then. I know his vengeful race ; and, trust me, Hilda will bear us no good-will for the sake of that ancient feud."

"An if it be so," answered Hartmut, "have I not swift ships, and valiant swords to fill them ? Truly I



should rejoice to lead a host over the sea for the maiden's sake, that I might show her I am worthy to be her mate."

"Well spoken, son," said Gerlinta, "but we will first send trusty messengers that we may know of a truth if they bear us spite for the old wars; and if they dare to slight thee or thy servants, thou shalt soon stand before Matalan with fifty thousand men."

"So be it," answered Ludwig, "since ye are thus minded. I will give you twelve measures of silver from my treasury, that our messengers may go well-mounted and with rich apparel. God wot, I wish them well home again!"

Then Hartmut chose him sixty knights of noble blood and good repute, and Gerlinta gave to them surcoats of velvet, and fine garments cunningly broidered by her women; and sought out for them the strongest and finest horses in the whole Norman land, and put upon them saddle-cloths and housings wrought in fine gold. And she gave into the hand of the chief messenger sealed letters, bidding him deliver them into Hetel's hand; and instructed him how he should uphold his master's honour before the Hegelings, and wished him God speed and a safe return. The messengers rode away towards the Hegelings' land, and journeyed for many days by land and sea, reaching the borders of Hetel's kingdom towards the end of the fourth month.

The peasants whom they met told them that they



were in the land of Horand the Dane, wherefore they rode to his burg, as in duty bound, and entreated hospitality of him and safe conduct to Matalan. The brave singer received them with honour, harboured them many days in his castle, and when they were rested and ready to depart, he chose six of his chief knights to accompany them to Hetel's court. They reached Matalan in safety, and were heartily received by Hetel and his people ; for men saw by their noble steeds and costly garments that they were the servants of some great prince, though none guessed what errand had brought them to the land of the Hegelings. On the twelfth day, according to custom, they went up to the King to declare their business, and delivered into his hand the letters they had received from Hartmut. But Hetel, when he knew their purport, was exceeding wroth, and would have smitten the Normans had not Horand's men stood between them.

"I wonder greatly at your master's boldness," spake King Hetel ; "he asks my daughter's hand with as little scruple as if she were a peasant wench. Tell him that I count his letter foul scorn to me and Queen Hilda."

"How so?" asked the Earl who bore Hartmut's letter. "Our master tells you that he desires the maid ; and he offers her his crown. King Hartmut is a hero without a stain. Trust me, he needs not go begging for a wife."



“He will find no wife here,” answered Hilda. “Know ye not that Ludwig was subject to my father King Hagen, and held a hundred burgs under him, and was his cupbearer at Balyan, until in my father’s old age he forswore his truth and kindled unrighteous strife? Now God be with my child! I will take heed that she never weds the son of a vassal. Tell your master to apparel himself and go wooing among his neighbours; for Gudrun shall never dwell in the house of the false Ludwig.”

When the Normans heard these words they left the king’s presence in high displeasure, and quitted the burg of Matalan that night, and rode home with heavy hearts, for they knew surely that trouble would come on the Normans and the Hegelings, because of the bitter words the queen had spoken. When they reached Cassian, where Ludwig dwelt, they feared to come into the king’s presence, for they knew his fury would be kindled at the evil tidings. Much they marvelled that he heard them to the end, and spake not a whit. Hartmut likewise held his peace; for it was not his wont to bluster when he was wroth; but Gerlinta chafed and scolded, and bemoaned the day that she had clad the good messengers so bravely, and sent them forth to seek sorrow. After a while Hartmut spake.

“Did ye see King Hetel’s daughter while ye dwelt at Matalan? Is she in truth as fair as men say?”

The earl answered :



“Yea ; she extels all women in beauty, and he who looks on her must needs love her.”

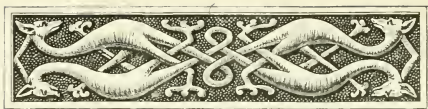
Then Hartmut answered :

“Enough : she shall yet be my wife !”

And that same night he sent swift riders round the land to bid the Earls call together their fighting men and make ready to fall upon the Hegelings.







### CHAPTER III.

#### *How the King of Zealand sought Gudrun's Hand.*

WINTER and summer had passed away ; Gudrun had grown to womanhood ; but her father had given her to no man, holding all comers unworthy of her hand. With the second summer came a fresh wooer, King Herwig of Zealand, a brave sword, comely withal, and of ancient race. Men said that his land was barren, and his people poor, and that he was loftier of heart than beseemed his deserts ; but Gudrun treated him more graciously for this, despising pomp and riches ; yet with the modesty of a maid she gave him no signs of preference over the rest of her father's guests.

Foremost at feast and tourney was a strange knight, of whose name and birth men knew nothing, save that he came from the north, and had often fought upon the seas. This stranger followed the maid Gudrun like her shadow, vexing King Herwig greatly thereby ; for he could thus never find occasion to speak privily to the maid, and lay his suit before her as he desired.

It would have been little marvel if Gudrun had



loved the stranger, for no warrior at Hetel's court could surpass him in strength and swiftness; and Horand himself could not discourse more sweetly. King Hetel praised his valour loudly, Hilda looked on him with favour, and Gudrun conversed with him so willingly that he began to hope he had won her love.

When the time drew near that he knew King Hetel would entreat of him his land and birth, he sent a secret letter to Gudrun declaring his love.

"Know, fair Gudrun," he wrote, "that he who seeks your favour is Hartmut, King of Normandy. Give me a word of kindness, seeing that I have put my life in peril for your sake." Now the maiden bore him neither love nor hate, but remembering with what scorn his messengers had been treated, she was loath that he should suffer further wrong. Therefore she sent him word that he should flee thence with all speed if he would scape the dungeon, for that he had been betrayed to her father by one of his henchmen.

Hartmut departed that same eve, bearing a heavy burden on his mind, for the fires of love and rage consumed him by turns, and by day and night he ceased not to consider how he should pay back to Hetel the insults he had received, yet in such wise that he might not lose the favour of Gudrun.

When he reached Cassian and told his mother how he had been forced to flee away privily to escape Hetel's dungeon, Gerlinta's rage waxed stronger against Hilda and her kin.



“Now thou mayst plainly see what manner of folk they are,” she spake; “because thou hadst compassion and didst put off the day of vengeance, being loath to grieve the maid and slay her kin; and didst vail thy worth, and go as a simple knight in humble fashion, suing for her favour, they have repaid thee with fresh scorn and driven thee from their gate. Therefore we will wait no longer, but fall upon the Hegelings with fire and sword, and bring the pride of Hilda and her kin to the dust!”

So Hartmut and Ludwig gathered their hosts together, and got their ships in readiness to sail against the Hegelings with the first fair wind.

Meanwhile Herwig of Zealand, nowise daunted by the rebuff the brave Hartmut had suffered, followed Gudrun daily, showing her by his words and looks how greatly he desired to win her love. Being well assured, though she spake not, that she bore him no ill-will, he went up boldly to King Hetel, and asked the maiden’s hand in marriage, thinking that he should have better luck than the others, for, as his kingdom lay on the borders of the Hegelings’ land, he might be a good neighbour or a dangerous foe.

But Hetel, taking no thought of this in his pride, denied him his daughter with brief words; and, when Herwig besought him, bade him hold his peace, for that he and Hilda had no mind to wed their daughter save to some king rich and mighty as Attila himself.

Then Herwig was wroth, and swore that he would



bring sorrow to his door and make him rue his pride ; but Hetel recked little of his threats, knowing that the Zealanders were a peaceful folk who loved better to pasture their sheep quietly at home, than to seek fame on the battlefield. So the King of Zealand rode back with his men, filled with anger against King Hetel, while his soul dwelt with delight upon the image of the fair Gudrun.

Ere many weeks had passed, Irolt, whose lands bordered upon Zealand, sent Hetel tidings that Herwig had gathered his fighting men together, with intent to do him a mischief. Thereupon Hetel and his wife took counsel what they should do ; and he, fearing lest evil should come upon the land for his sake, said :

“ Let us give the maid to Herwig, and save the folk thereby from bloodshed.”

But Hilda mocked, saying that the Zealanders were poor and faint-hearted, and would not make war on the Hegelings.

Three months passed over in peace, and they thought that the tidings they had heard were but an idle tale ; when lo, one morning, he who watched upon the tower of Matalan saw the glimmer of helms and spears through the morning mists. Now the watcher was old, and moreover weary for lack of sleep, therefore he waited awhile, not knowing if his eyes had deceived him. But even while he stood there, peering into the grey morning, the sun, breaking from the



clouds, drove back the shades of night, and shewed him plainly a host of horse and foot, about a league from the castle. Then he called from the turret :

“Arouse ye, good knights ! Strange guests are here ! The morning beams shine on a thousand helms !”

The heroes sprang nimbly from their beds in Hetel’s halls, and armed themselves with speed. Truly they had need to look well to their lives and honour, for Herwig had come to woo his beloved in fire and storm. Hetel and Hilda went to the window and saw the Zealanders advancing with banners flying and trumpets sounding ; the valiant men of Gallis, renowned since old times on land and sea, marched first, with the king at their head. Hilda was dismayed at the sight ; in sooth she had cause to rue her pride. She would fain have kept Hetel within the walls, but he, when he heard the trumpets call to battle, gathered together his knights and rode towards the gate. In vain did Hilda entreat him to tarry until the folk in the city should be roused ; he would not hearken to her ; the scent of the coming battle was like sweet incense in his nostrils ; his face grew as bright as though he were going to a wedding-feast. Shaking his battle-axe aloft, he cried :

“Would that old Wat of Sturm-land were here ! It is long since he and I stood together in battle.”

So he rode forth, and encountered the Earl of



Gallis, whom he speedily overthrew; but while he fought, his knights, of whom there were barely two hundred, were encompassed by the Zealanders, and many of them were slain. Hetel, seeing them fall around him, cried :

“ They are too many for us. Follow me to the gate, that we may shut them out.”

Whereupon he turned round and sought to enter the gate ; but lo, the swift King of Zealand was there before him, and his warriors threatened him on every side. Hetel, raising his sword, called Herwig by name ; the valiant Herwig stepped before his men ; and the twain flew at each other like panthers of the wood. Herwig fought furiously, but Hetel withheld his hand, seeing that his foe was but a stripling, while the King of the Hegelings had proved his strength in a hundred fights ; nevertheless the young king pressed him so hard that he perceived he might fare ill in the encounter, and that it behoved him to look well to his honour. Therefore he set to work in grim earnest. Herwig defended himself right bravely ; and the warriors, laying down their arms, looked on with amaze at the prowess of the two kings. The air was filled with the clash of their blows, red sparks flew from their shields and their horses' hoofs, as they wheeled round or parried with the swiftness of lightning. After a while they were fain to pause, and Hetel gazed upon the young King of Zealand, marvelling that one of such slight stature, and moreover



little used to the fight, had stood up so manfully against him.

He laughed aloud and said :

“ Would that those who did not suffer me to have this knight for a friend could behold the wounds he has dealt me ! ”

When he had said this he fell to with greater fury, and Gudrun, who had come to the window in the gateway, saw Herwig hard beset by her father, and bleeding from many wounds.

Then fear and pity stole into her virgin heart, and love, who had long watched his opportunity, followed swiftly in at the open door ; a sweet faintness seized all her limbs, and she trembled like a meadow flower at the first kiss of the wind of May. Now she beheld how her father rushed furiously on Herwig, and nearly brought him to the ground ; but the young knight, recovering himself in time, paid him back with a lusty blow, that broke the band of his helmet, leaving his head bare. Then Gudrun wept with anguish : fain would she that her father should prevail ; fain would she have saved the young king ! In sooth she knew not to whom she should wish good fortune. Anon Herwig gave Hetel a heavy blow with his axe ; but the king, uplifting his mace, brought it down upon Herwig's shoulder, broke the greaves of his armour, and caused him to fall from his horse. Then springing to the ground he grappled with Herwig, who defended himself manfully with his sword.



“Father,” cried Gudrun, “if you love me, or care for my weal, stop this bloody fight. Behold how many brave men lie dead and dying around you : the blood flows faster and faster from your hauberk ; the posterns and walls are red with it. Make peace with your foes until the morrow, and bid King Herwig come to me in the hall, that he may declare, if it be his pleasure, wherefore he has come here with his fighting men, bringing fire and sword upon our land in the blessed harvest time.”

“Fair maiden,” called out King Herwig, “I desire nothing better than that I may come before you in peace, and tell you all you may seek to know.”

So Hetel yielded to his daughter’s prayer, and made a truce with the men of Zealand, and the knights shook off their mail and washed the black stains from their hot brows ; and when their wounds had been dressed, they appeared before Gudrun in the great hall. The gentle maid bade them be seated, and caused wine and mead to be served to them ; and when they had rested and were refreshed she turned to King Herwig and bade him speak. The bold king stood up before her, and spoke out so that all the knights, friends and foes, could hear him :

“I sought you for my wife. They told me I was too poor for you. I wot well I am poor and plain beside you, sun of my life ; but oft have the rich found joy and content under a poor man’s roof.”

As he spoke, he stood before her fearless and



open-browed, fair as a picture worked out carefully by a master-hand, on a snow-white parchment ; and the king's daughter answered him :

“Who could despise you that saw you fight as you did even now, and for a woman's sake ? If they said I scorned you, it was false. No maid could bear you greater good-will than I ; and if my friends were willing, I would gladly abide with you for ever, and hold myself honoured to be your wife.”

“If you deign to love me, fair maid,” answered the knight, “I swear to be kind and true to you always, and to do your pleasure in all things.”

“Gladly will I give you my hand, dear knight,” said the maiden ; “and you shall ever find me a true and loving wife.”

Then she bade them fetch the king and queen ; and when they were come she told them she wished herself no better man for a husband than Herwig, and prayed them not to cross her will ; to which they answered that they desired, before all things, her happiness, therefore they would willingly receive Herwig as their son. So the strife was ended with two gold rings, and Herwig could kiss his betrothed on the mouth ; and I know not how many kisses he took to seal the bond. Would to God that all fighting came to such a happy end !

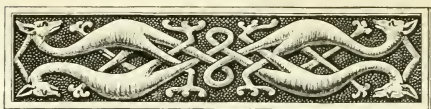
And there was peace between the men of Zealand and the Hegelings, and they dwelt together like brothers ; and there was great joy in the city because



of the wedding-feast which Hilda purposed to make. Herwig besought the queen that the wedding might be hastened that he might take Gudrun home before the Holy Eve ; but Hilda denied him, saying that her daughter must not be wed like a peasant wench ; and that it would take a full year to prepare garments for the feast and the crowning. The long waiting was sorely against the young king's mind, but seeing that his entreaties availed nothing he held his peace, and waited as patiently as he might. Woe was the day ! For their women's whims and finery many a brave knight paid with his life upon the Wulpensand !







## CHAPTER IV.

### *How Siegfried made war on Herwig.*

Now while Herwig still tarried at Matalan, loth to bid the fair Gudrun good-bye, they told King Siegfried in Alzabie how she had been given to the King of Zealand in marriage. Thereupon the knight recalled to mind the scornful denial which he had received from King Hetel; and perceiving that he might now do him a despite by ravaging Herwig's lands, he straightway set sail for Zealand with a host of warriors in twenty great ships. They fell upon the defenceless peasants like wolves upon the sheep, burned up the villages and towns, laid waste the fields, destroyed the springing crops, and brought the poor folk to want and ruin. Moreover they burned all the ships; but one fisherman escaping from their hands reached Matalan in a little boat, and told the ill tidings to King Herwig and his men.

The good king, when he heard the cry of his people, tarried not an hour, but kissed his bride, bade her be of good cheer, and then, mounting his horse, rode day and night until he encountered Siegfried, who was encamped near the burg of Sevan.



The King of Moorland laughed with scorn, when he beheld the little band of Zealanders draw near, deeming in his pride that he could sweep them like dust from his path ; but the first day's fight shewed the Zealanders to be men of pith and marrow, for at sundown they still kept an unbroken front, having laid hundreds of their foes in the dust.

The fight began anew with the first beams of morning ; but Herwig's men, who had not broken their fast, while the others had supped lustily on the spoils of the land, were unable to stand against the numbers that pressed on them. Many were slain ; and the rest, sorely wounded, fought their way back into the stronghold of Sevan, where they shut themselves in until the people might come to their help.

But the country folk, being houseless and in sore need, could do naught to help them ; moreover the Moorlanders kept watch night and day, so that no man could enter the burg and bring them food.

The wells began to fail, and there were breaches in the wall, through which their foes strove to force their way.

Many days passed, and Herwig, perceiving that they could not hold out much longer, sent messengers to Matalan to make his need known unto his dear bride Gudrun. His messengers rode night and day, until their weary steeds dropped dead by the road side, and in twenty days they stood before King Hetel and said :



“Herwig is in sore need of help. His lands are laid in ashes, his best knights are slain, and he is hard beset in the burg of Sevan. We have journeyed here in peril of our lives. Herwig bids you help him for the sake of your daughter, and because of the weeping women and children that are shut up with him.”

Hetel answered :

“Seek the maid Gudrun, and ask what is her pleasure ; for whatsoever she commands shall be done.”

So the messengers went into Gudrun’s presence ; and when she had answered their greetings, she asked how her lord fared.

“Noble maid,” they answered, “we left him sound in body. What may have befallen him ere this we cannot tell. He sends thee word that his folk are slaughtered, his lands and castles burned ; and that he himself is shut up in Sevan, expecting hourly to lose his life. Our master Herwig will prove your truth and loyalty now, noble maiden.”

When Gudrun heard this sorrowful news, she ran to her father, and flung herself upon his neck weeping.

“Help me, King,” she said ; “or, if thy sword cannot save us, I will go and share death and ruin with Herwig !”

“God forbid !” answered King Hetel ; “we will do our best. To-day even will I send messengers to old Wat in Sturmland. He can bring us a thousand proven swords ; I will send swift riders to the knight



Morung in Nifland, and to Frut and Horand at Givers on the Sand. Thy brother Ortwin will bring us good help ; Irolt will gather all his people together ; and before three days are sped thou shalt see a host in readiness."

Queen Hilda likewise spake comfort to her daughter, and threw open all her chests and coffers, saying graciously :

"To those who do thy will, dearest daughter, I will give glittering armour of steel, and helm and shield, and what else the warriors may lack."

On the third day came Wat from Sturmland with a thousand trusty men ; on the seventh day came swift Horand of the Danes with fourteen hundred spears. The bold knight Morung followed him with two thousand skilled warriors ; and Gudrun's brother Ortwin came from beyond seas with four thousand fighting men. They all encamped before Matalan ; and Gudrun's heart grew glad when she saw the companies of stately men, and she spake graciously to the chiefs, thanking them for all they willed to do for her sake. Then Hetel kissed his weeping wife and daughter, who prayed God to bring him back with life and honour, and rode forth. The young squires outside the gate were singing ballads and shouting. They were young and lusty, and hoped for honour and rich spoils ; for the enemy was still afar off, and they little thought that they should leave their bones in a strange land.



So all the knights departed, and rode on, a great host of men, till they reached Sevan; and King Siegfried, who had encompassed Herwig, was encompassed unawares in his turn. When Herwig perceived Hetel's banner, and knew that help was come, he issued from the gates with his knights, and fell upon the Moorlanders, furious as a she-bear robbed of her young. Meanwhile King Hetel pressed them in the rear, and did great slaughter among them. Siegfried fought like a lion; for well he knew that if he fell into Herwig's hands he would shew him no mercy because of his evil deeds. From sunrise to sundown the brave knights hacked and hewed each other, and the air was filled with the terrible noise of battle, and the fields were red with blood. Bravely fought the Hegelings. What lightning strokes flashed from behind Morung's shield! how gleamed gray Irolt's sword in the fight! Old Wat of Sturm-land cleft many a noble head! Horand brought many a proud helm to the dust! Not less valiantly fought young Ortwin, who made brave hearts taste bitter death that day!

Twelve days they fought hand to hand, till the soil grew fat with blood and the dead lay thick as hail-stones in March. On the twelfth eve Siegfried went out to view the battlefield; and his heart failed him when he saw how many of his good knights lay there cold and stiff in the moonlight.

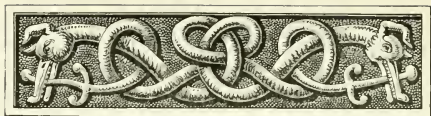
"Behold how many dead lie around us," he said to his warriors; "if we wait till the morrow we shall all



die by the hand of Hetel. Let us depart quietly in the night, and intrench ourselves in the burg by the sea."

So the men of Alzabie fled in the night, and took refuge in a stronghold guarded on two sides by the sea, and walled and moated on the landward. In the morning the Hegelings found their place empty, and following the track of the horses, reached the stronghold, and saw Siegfried's banner with his crest, an armed head all gold, waving from the great tower. When the chiefs beheld how securely he of Moorland had perched himself at the top of the steep rocks, like an eagle in its eyrie, they chafed and fumed, and swore that they would not leave the place until they had brought him to a reckoning; and they built a camp for the host that they might shut Siegfried in, and weary him out with hunger and thirst. To Hilda and Gudrun they sent messengers with the news of the war; telling them moreover that they must not count to see them for many months; and Hetel commanded that his queen should rule the land until his return, and that those left behind should serve her faithfully. This done, they sat down with as much patience as they could muster until the wily King of Moorland might venture from his stronghold.





## CHAPTER V.

### *How Horand told the tale of Hetel's wooing.*

FOR three months the two kings and their hosts watched outside Siegfried's walls, but the King of Moorland kept them at bay; and when, ever and anon, a band of daring warriors essayed to scale the steep rocks and walls, he and his men hurled them down, bruised and bleeding, to death. In vain they tried the gate: they could not shake its sure foundations; and they soon saw that, unless hunger compelled their foe to yield, they might keep their watch and ward until they became gray.

The dark days of the fall of the leaf came upon them, and they began to grow weary of their task.

They wiled away the time as best they might with chess and dice and hunting songs, but the younger men often murmured; and even the patient Morung, as he stretched out his great limbs in the tent, owned that he was weary of playing cat and mouse so long.

"There is no help for it," said Iroît; "we have sworn to take Siegfried, and we may bid wife and child farewell for another year, since only hunger will



compel the Moorlanders to yield. This idle waiting chafes me most of all ; for I count the time as lost, seeing that I can find no pasture for my sword."

"True," said Wat, emptying his drinking-horn, "we have waited three moons here, and winter will be down on us anon, yet I have never had a blow at him of Alzabie. Fill my horn again and let us wile away the hour as best we may. Good times and bad times and all times pass over."

"It would ill beseem us," said the wise Frut, "to grudge aught that is done for the sake of a fair woman. It was not our wont years ago. Dost thou mind the time, Horand, when we fought for Queen Hilda on the strand at Waleis?"

"My foster-mother sang to me of the fight at Waleis," said young Ortwin, "when I was too young to heed the tale ; but I would fain hear it from thy lips, Frut."

"'Tis more than twenty years since," answered Frut, "and I never cared to remember a deed that was done, therefore my memory serves me ill. Bid Horand tell the tale. He knows no lack of words, and remembers it as if it were yesterday."

"Aye, it is more than twenty years ago," said Horand, "and shining brown locks have grown gray and scant since that day. Why should I sing of the days of our youth ? Content yourselves with the dice and the good red wine, and leave the past in its grave."



“Not so,” said Wat, who sat leaning his shaggy head on his sword’s handle ; “it is meet that these youths should learn what we did in our young time. Sing, and I will fight the battle over again, and wrestle with Wild Hagen, as on the shore at Waleis.”

“Sing,” said Frut, “that I may hear once more how I gave wise counsel, and watched for the foe early and late, and guided the ships across the dangerous shoals.”

“Sing,” said Herwig, “that I may hear how others suffered, and forget my longing for my dear bride Gudrun.”

Then Horand no longer denied their entreaties, but, while they all sat still as children, began the story of King Hetel’s wooing.

Long years ago, he sang, there lived in Ireland a mighty king, Sigeband by name, son of the renowned Ger, by his wife the fair and virtuous Uta.

This prince was brought up by his parents, according to the usage of the land, in all manner of knightly sports and whatever else befitted his great estate ; and when he reached manhood none could excel him in the field or in the hall.

Ger and Uta took great delight in their son, and looked upon him with pride and joy ; but, alas ! he who smites both noble and simple, he whom we all await daily and hourly with fear, Death, parted this noble couple in the midst of their happiness, and Uta was left a widow.



Like a good queen, ever mindful of the weal of the land, she admonished her son to choose a wife betimes, and Sigeband hearkened to her counsels, and sent to ask the hand of the fair maid of Norway. She was promised to him ; and straightway the young king made preparations to fetch her home to his castle of Balyan in great state and splendour. It was spring time when the young queen landed in Ireland ; the birds were singing their best in thicket and grove, and the roadsides were bedecked with the fairest flowers. She rode towards Balyan with a great company of young knights and fair maidens, who laughed and jested in the sunshine, all light of heart and in the prime of their youth. Behind followed a train of pack-horses bearing gold and jewels, and rich robes, her portion from her mother's house.

When she drew near Balyan, Sigeband went forth to meet her, and, riding up, bowed to her, and kissed her amid the clashing of shields and the braying of trumpets, and the shouts and huzzas of the people, who stood by the wayside in thousands to welcome the maid of Norway.

The wedding feast, which began next day, was held in great pomp ; and the fair beginning seemed to promise a fair end, for Sigeband and his wife lived in happiness and honour, beloved by their people and feared by their enemies. Their lands were wide and rich, they had treasure in abundance, and the praise of the poor and the oppressed ; and that nothing might



be wanting to their happiness, there was born to them, in the third year of their marriage, a son, whom they called Hagen. This lad, before he could walk, gave promise that he would take after his renowned forefathers. He would not suffer the women to nurse him ; but shewed great delight when the knights carried him upon their arms. He loved to play with swords and spears ; and as soon as he could lisp besought his father to give him a little coat of mail and a helm.

One fine summer's day Sigeband sat with his wife under a cedar tree before their palace windows, when she began to complain that in the midst of all their honour and happiness she had a desire which had never yet been fulfilled. Thereupon the king asked what she might desire, and she answered him :

“ I long to see thee at the head of all thy knights, clothed in mail, wielding thy spear and battle-axe. Truly I know that there are none in the world as rich as we ; but of what avail are our silver and gold and treasures, when none can see them or share them. A king, methinks, should be freehanded with his wealth, and share it with the good knights who are wounded and weary with fighting his battles.”

Now the queen was so generous that she would willingly have given away all the thirty estates which had been granted to her ; moreover she loved show and splendour, which in the end brought her great trouble, as ye shall presently hear. Sigeband answered her courteously :



“Let me know, noble queen, what I shall do in order to fulfil thy wishes; for thou knowest I will spare neither trouble nor treasure to give thee delight.”

She answered him :

“When I dwelt a maiden in Friedeschotten, my father’s knights wrestled and fought daily before us for the prize, and I loved well to see such sports; but in Balyan my ears have grown strange to the clash of the shields and the clang of trumpets; wherefore I greatly desire to see a tourney. Send therefore to all thy knights and nobles, and bid them come to feast with us, and I will send for my friends and near of kin in Norway, and we will hold a great feast, such as was never known in Ireland before.”

To this Sigeband answered that he desired nothing but to please her; so the next day the queen sent over the land to bid all the nobles far and near to the feast at Balyan. Likewise she sent to Norway, and her messengers told of the rich suits of armour, the noble steeds, and precious jewels, which were to be tilted for, and all the nobles got ready to sail to Ireland when the summer time should make a smooth sea. Sigeband made great cheer for his guests; a whole pine wood was cut down and brought to Balyan, where the trunks were hewn into benches which should seat sixty thousand people. Coffers and presses, cellars and chambers, were ransacked, and their stores of furs and jewels and armour brought to light; and every knight who was poor received a



horse, arms, or what else he desired, from the king's hand.

The queen, on her side, gave costly apparel to five hundred of her ladies and noble maidens, veils, fringes of gold, sables, samite, and all the stuffs with which women love to deck themselves; and the report of this generosity drew thousands to the court; so that the palace and city swarmed with guests, like a beehive in summer with bees. When the guests from Norway had come, the feasting and tilting began, and lasted nine days.

Every morning Sigeband tilted with his guests in presence of the people, and showed himself a master in all feats of arms. When the warriors were weary of fighting they laid aside their armour, and entered the feasting halls with the women; where the red wine flowed in streams, and the sound of harps and lutes filled the air from morning to night. The mirth lasted late into the night, and in the whole city was heard nothing but the merry laugh and the voice of song; and lamps and torches made the streets as light as day.

But now hear what happened on the tenth day, when all their feasting and mirth were turned into bitter sorrow.

The king was sitting among his guests, in the great hall, considering what sport they should begin next, when there appeared among them a minstrel, who promised them great entertainment, if they would suffer



him to play before them. On hearing this, Sigeband with his guests descended into the court, whither all the people in the castle crowded, to make merry at the play of the minstrel. It chanced that little Hagen was amongst the crowd, being led by a fair young maiden, and watched by the women who had him in charge. In the crush and tumult, the child, with the young maid, were borne away from them, and were left alone on the skirts of the crowd, whence came the misfortune which I told ye of.

In the midst of the sport and laughter a griffin, surely an evil creature sent to work mischief, came flying overhead, shedding darkness from its wings like a cloud, and making a roaring like the wind as it cleft the air with its heavy pinions. The monster alighted upon a tree beneath which the child Hagen and the maid were standing: the boughs cracked and trembled under its weight, and caused the young maid to look up, who, on perceiving the monstrous creature, ran off screaming, and left the little child alone. Before any could help him, the griffin, stooping from the tree, picked him up in its beak, and soaring away with him was presently lost in the clouds. The king and queen with their guests stood for a while motionless with fear, unable to believe their eyes, and then burst into cries and lamentations for the child.

Sigeband was like one possessed, beating his bosom and weeping bitterly for the loss of his son; but the queen after a while grew calmer, and said :



“It must be as God wills it, if we were all struck dead at once.”

In vain they sent messengers through the land ; there was no news of the bird or the child ; and with sorrow-stricken hearts they were forced to believe that Hagen had been slain and devoured by the creature in some lonely spot.

The feasting was turned into tears and woe ; the guests prepared to depart. When they came to bid the queen farewell, she said :

“I may not let you go until ye have received somewhat from our hands. Take this silver and gold, and believe that ye are dear to our hearts.”

And Sigeband gave them horses of the Irish breed, very tall and strong, and costly furs for winter clothing, so that they departed full of the praise of Sigeband and the queen, spreading in all lands the news of their great riches, and the splendour of their burg and town of Balyan.

In a little while the burg was quiet again ; the last knight rode away, and the king and queen were left to their sorrow.

Thus ended the great feasting at Balyan.





## CHAPTER VI.

### *How Wild Hagen dwelt in the Desert.*

AND now let us hear how the child Hagen fared.

By God's mercy he was not dead ; for the creature, sated with prey, had no mind to slay him ; but, grasping him in its claws, it bore him over land and sea until it reached a desert island where it had its nest on the summit of a great cliff.

Alighting there it gave the poor child to its brood to be devoured, and these for a while played with him as a cat plays with a mouse, until the strongest, seizing him by the shoulder, flew off with him to a neighbouring tree. Hopping from bough to bough, with the child in its mouth, it alighted at last upon a rotten branch, which broke beneath its weight, and caused it to let the child drop. In the dusk, the boy, though sadly bruised and scratched, made shift to hide himself in the underwood ; and being weary, he fell asleep, and slept till daylight. He awoke cold and hungry, and, perceiving that the griffins were not at hand, he ventured to creep from his shelter, hoping to find wild berries with which he might still his hunger.



But no root nor berry grew in the desolate place ; the ground was parched and barren ; around him stood the vast trunks of the pine-trees crumbling and hoary with age ; before him a sandy slope stretched down to the rocky beach, on which the black sea broke with the noise of thunder.

The lad looked about in terror and amazement ; and after a while he perceived three figures moving among the stems of the trees. He drew near ; they went behind a rock, but presently came out again, and he saw that they were maidens, strangely attired in garments woven of the long grey moss that grew on the pines. The eldest spoke to him :

“Why hast thou pursued us here into this refuge that God gave us ? Go, seek thy companions in the wild sea. Surely we have had enough of woe and terror.”

“Let me abide with you,” said Hagen, “my parents are Christian folk. The griffin brought me here but yester eve.”

Then the maidens perceived with delight that he was no wild creature of the sea, but a comely child ; albeit he was sorely bruised and torn and dusty from his encounter with the griffin ; and they led him to a cave in which they dwelt, hiding themselves all day for fear of the griffins ; and they spread a couch of dried moss that he might rest his bruised limbs, and brought him water with which they washed the dust and blood from his face and hands.

When he had rested awhile they said :



"Now tell us who thou art, and how thou wast brought here."

But the lad, who had all the while silently borne the pangs of hunger, said :

"I would gladly first eat a morsel of bread, for I have not eaten these two days."

"Alas!" said the eldest of the maidens, "our cellar is poorly provided, and we have neither cup-bearer nor steward; but what we have thou shalt freely share."

Thereupon they all went forth to gather herbs, and soon returned with a large bundle.

"This is our only food," they said, "and we gather it at daybreak before the griffins are astir."

Hagen, who had fed daintily on venison and wine, loathed the tasteless meal; but ere long his hunger mastered his humour, and he devoured eagerly what was set before him. When he was sated he told the maidens his name, and whence he had come; and they, in their turn, told how they had been brought at different times to the lonely spot, how they had escaped from the griffin's claws, and found each other; and how they had dwelt for more than three years in the cave, where they had secured themselves with a great stone against the griffins and the other wild creatures of the wood. The eldest and fairest of these maids was named Hilda; she was daughter of a king in India; the youngest came from Portugal; the other from Sweden. All three tended the lad with great



love ; and, though he tasted nothing but herbs and spring water, he grew apace ; and at twelve years had the limbs and stature of a man.

They had dwelt together four summers and four winters in the cave, and had not ventured beyond the edge of the wood for fear of the griffins ; the fifth winter was at hand and brought them no hope of release ; when one night a terrible storm arose, the like of which they had never known before. The hissing lightning clave the great pines, and they fell to the ground with a mighty crash ; the sea roared and lashed the shore ; the brine flew into the opening of their cave ; and they lay in terror all night, fearing that some great misfortune would happen them.

When morning dawned Hagen arose, and looking seawards, beheld a stranded ship deserted by her crew. Hoping to encounter some Christian soul, he stole to the edge of the wood, whence he could see the beach ; and perceived that the sand was strown with the dead bodies of the brave sailors, who had been washed off the ship by the storm. The griffins were busy fetching the corpses up to their eyry, where they feasted greedily with terrible clamour. When Hagen told the maidens what he had seen, they began to lament that what might have been their deliverance had only brought them fresh sorrow ; and they sat all day bemoaning the brave men that had fallen into the maw of the ravenous creatures. Young Hagen meanwhile considered how he might possess himself of some



of the goods which he had seen cast up by the sea ; and he rose early the next morning thinking that the griffins would be less watchful, after they had gorged themselves with flesh. He found the shore strewn with planks and merchandise ; but these he left untouched, when he perceived a dead man clad in a shining coat of mail and helm of steel, which had certainly saved his body from the griffins.

With some trouble he stripped the corse, and buckled the armour round his own body ; a sword and bow lay near ; he seized them, and turned towards the cave, purposing to shew them to the maidens. Suddenly he felt a rush of air, and heard a harsh cry, and saw that the old griffin was flying down upon him. There was no time to flee to the cave ; the lad turned and faced him with the uplifted sword. The creature assailed him with its beak, and strove to tear out his eyes, which were uncovered ; but young Hagen dealt it a blow with the sword which cleft one wing, and with a second blow lamed it in the leg, so that it fell helpless on the ground.

But now the other griffins, roused by the cries of the old one, came flying towards him. He had hard work to defend himself against them, and for a while the three maidens, who watched him from afar, trembled for his life. They marvelled greatly when they saw one griffin after another fall to the ground dead beneath the sword of young Hagen. When the last was killed he came towards them, crying :



“Come forth now, and taste freely the sun and the air! God has granted us deliverance from our troubles.”

They came forth at these words, and going up to him kissed him on the mouth, praising his valour and courage, which had freed them from their cruel tyrants. Now they could wander at their own will over hill and dale, for Hagen at their side shielded them with his sword and bow from all danger. The beasts of the wood learned to fear him; he leaped like a panther and fought like a lion; he could hit the bird on the wing and the fish in the water. In vain the deer sought to escape his arrow; Hagen, swift and cunning as the wild creatures themselves, was king of the wood.

But while he was terrible in the chase and the fight, he was the soul of gentleness to the maidens. He bore home on his shoulders the deer he had slain; gathered the dried fallen wood, and after much searching found a flint from which he drew sparks. Then he lighted a fire, prepared and cooked the food with his own hands, and served it to the maidens, rejoicing that they could now feast on venison, in place of the tasteless herbs which had been their food in former times.

It chanced that Hagen, while hunting a wild boar, came upon the lair of a dragon which had hidden undisturbed in the depths of the forest for many years. The monster turned upon him in fury, seeking to rend



him, but after a hard fight Hagen laid him dead on the ground ; and began flaying off his horny skin with his sword. He was parched with thirst ; his tongue clave to the roof of his mouth ; and no water was at hand. In his great need he drank the warm blood of the dragon, and presently perceived that his limbs had received fresh strength.

The maidens saw with surprise that he could fell the boar and the great elk with one blow of his fist, and marvelled whence he had received his great power.

Hagen himself marvelled no less, unwitting that the dragon's blood possessed such virtue ; but feeling that the strength was sent to him for his deliverance, he resolved to abide no longer in the desert, but determined to seek his way to some peopled shore.

So one morning he set forth with the maidens, and took his way through the pine forest which encompassed them, guiding himself by the stars of which he caught glimpses where the wood was thin. For twenty-four days they traversed the trackless forest, at last they reached its boundaries and found that they were on the seashore, but in a desolate spot where neither town nor castle was in sight. They gazed constantly seawards, knowing that their help must come thence ; and in a while they saw a ship bearing to land. Hagen shouted and made signals, and the vessel drew near ; but when the sailors saw the strange



attire of the maidens they took them for sea-monsters, and would not lower the boat to fetch them.

Hagen, perceiving that they were bearing off from land again, adjured them earnestly by Christ's name to rescue them from the inhospitable strand, where they would assuredly perish of hunger ; and the sailors seeing that they were no evil creatures, but Christians in distress, let down the boat with all speed. The maidens were greatly ashamed when they saw the strange men ; for their fair limbs were but scantily covered by the coats of long grey moss which they had woven in the pine-woods, and which were their only clothing ; and the captain, seeing their dismay, made his men fetch garments from the ship where-with they might cover themselves ere they went aboard.

Hagen demanded of the sailors from what land their ship had come ; and they told him it came from Salmé, and belonged to the Count of Garadie, who was even then on board the vessel. They reached the ship ; the count, with some of his knights, came forward, and received them with courteous words, and straightway bade the steward prepare a good meal for them. When the meal was over, the count asked whence they came, and what they were doing on that wild coast. The maidens answered him first : when they had ceased speaking the count demanded of Hagen his name and land. The youth told him how he had been carried off in his childhood by the griffins ;



how he had slain them and delivered the maidens from their captivity ; at which the count and his people could not contain their astonishment, for they knew well that one of these beasts was a match for five men. Then Hagen told of his birth and parentage, which amazed the knights still more ; they being neighbours of Sigeband, and knowing that he had given up his son for many years as one dead.

After they had questioned him awhile, as if to assure themselves he had not lied, the Count of Garadie said :

“ It is well for me that thou hast fallen into my hands, for now I will avenge myself on thy father Sigeband, who drove me from my castle and slew my knights.”

To this Hagen answered discreetly :

“ If my father hath done thee wrong, lead me home, and, I promise, he shall repay thee a thousand fold.”

“ Nay,” answered the count ; “ I will keep thee prisoner as a hostage for thy father’s behaviour ; and these maidens shall be kept likewise, but in all honour, as becomes their birth and their fair looks.”

Hagen was furious at these words : “ I will be no hostage ; and these maidens of mine shall not serve in thy halls.” Then turning to the mariners, he said : “ Steer straight for Ireland, and I will make you all rich in lands and treasures.”

The count bade them seize him. They laid hands



upon him, and sought to bind him. For awhile he seemed to yield, then, suddenly flinging out his mighty arms, he sent them spinning over the side of the vessel, one after another, till thirty of them were struggling in the waves at once. The Count of Garadie he flung on the deck, and would have slain ; but the maidens besought him for mercy, and at their entreaty he spared his life. The sailors and steersman meanwhile, wishing to keep their skins whole, had shaped the ship's course for Ireland ; and the count was forced to yield to Hagen's will, though sorely against his mind.

In six days they reached the harbour of Balyan, and Hagen said :

“Who will ride up to King Sigeband and tell him of my coming?”

But they were all afraid, for Sigeband had sworn to hang all the men of Garadie.

Hagen saw their dismay, and said :

“Fear not ; I will make your peace with my father ; and he shall give ye a rich guerdon for the news you bring him.”

At these words they delayed no longer, but made ready to go ; and when they asked Hagen what token they should bring of the truth of their tidings, he said :

“Tell my mother that her son had a little cross marked upon his breast, of the colour of gold, and by that sign she shall know if I am he.”

So the messengers rode up to the castle and told their errand, and were led into the hall where Sige-



band sat with his wife. He was wroth when he saw them, and said :

"How dare ye come here, knowing that I have sworn to hang ye all on the gallows?"

They answered :

"Your son Hagen sent us."

"Ye lie," answered Sigeband, "Hagen died years ago, and we bewail him to this day."

The messengers answered :

"He who calls himself Hagen bears the mark of the cross upon his breast. Ye shall know by this sign whether he be your son or not."

Then the queen said :

"The men have spoken truly. Let us ride down to the ship and see if it be indeed our son Hagen."

So they saddled and rode down to the ship with all speed, with their chief knights and ladies.

When Hagen saw the king and queen approaching, he descended from the vessel to meet them, and did reverence to them before the people.

"Is this the knight who has sent to us?" asked Sigeband of the count. "In good sooth it would please me well to call him my son."

The queen bade them clear a space, for the crowd pressed close round to see their meeting, and then bade Hagen uncover his neck. There, of a surety, was the mark of the cross, so that all men might plainly see it. Then the queen fell on Hagen's neck and kissed him.



“Welcome, Hagen, my only child ; I thought to have gone to the grave sorrowing, and now my woe is all turned to joy.”

Not less was the joy of Sigeband, who could not contain himself, but wept aloud before all the people. When the tumult had abated, Hagen besought his father that he would reward the Count of Garadie ; which the king gladly did, promising him peace for evermore, and loading him and his men with rich presents. For fourteen days they feasted with Sigeband’s knights at Balyan ; and then returned to their own land well pleased with the chance which had brought Hagen into their hands.

The whole land rejoiced with Sigeband ; and for many days the rich and poor round Balyan, and all strangers who chose to come, were feasted by the king and queen. On the fifth day, Hagen, who had shewn himself a match for the best of his father’s knights, both in the chase and the lists, was made a knight with other six hundred youths, the noblest of the land ; and a year later, his father, being weary of the cares of his estate, bestowed the crown upon him, and Hagen ruled in his stead. Being now king, his mother and the councillors desired that he should choose a wife. He answered them that he had chosen his wife already ; and that he would wed none but the maid Hilda, who had succoured him when he was forlorn in the wilderness.

This choice pleased his mother greatly ; the maiden



had dwelt in her chambers for more than a year, and she had seen that she was both fair and discreet. Sigeband, too, was content with his son's bride, and after a year had been spent in making preparations for the wedding-feast, they were wedded at Balyan before a great multitude of people.

And Hagen ruled the land wisely, and shewed himself terrible to all evil-doers; but to the poor he was a steady friend. Unlike his father, King Sigeband, he loved not to sit in peace at home, but was ever intent on some foray or adventure on land or sea. His wife bore him a fair daughter who was called Hilda after her mother, and who at twelve years excelled all maidens in beauty and gentleness. Wild Hagen looked upon her with jealous delight; he held her peerless among women; and thought no prince among his neighbours was worthy of her. Therefore when rich and noble princes came to Balyan and desired his daughter's hand, he answered them with mockery and scorn; and if they murmured at this he bade them stand up against him in the lists; promising that he who overcame him should receive the maid to wife. But vainly did those brave and noble wooers lift their swords against King Hagen; one after another they bit the dust, and departed from Balyan bruised and wounded, cured by rough blows of the love of Hagen's daughter. Other princes who heard of the hard treatment which the first wooers had received, sent messengers with letters containing gentle and courteous proposals; but Hagen

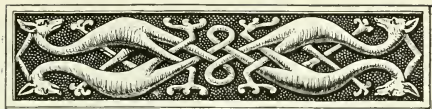


without more ado hanged their messengers on the first tree ; and the news of these fierce doings spread such fear through the lands, that the fair Hilda seemed like to remain a virgin to the end of her days.

But pride goes before a fall ; and Hagen's pride brought its own punishment, as ye will hear, in the end.







## CHAPTER VII.

### *Hetel.*

THERE grew up in the land of the Danes a young hero, Hetel by name, brave, fair, gentle, and a king to boot, a fitting mate for the dark-haired maid of Ireland, though Wild Hagen held him but as the dust under his feet ; for he was wont to boast when he had drunk wine, that he held fifteen kings in tribute, of whom the least was greater than the King of the Hegelings.

He knew not how rich King Hetel was in friends ; but ere his days were ended he learned to fear the cunning of the grey-headed Frut, and the axe of Wat of Sturmland, and the wrath of Irolt, when the Hegelings laughed him to scorn, and brought his pride to naught in the face of all his people !

Hetel was an orphan ; his uncle, Wat of Sturmland, reared and trained him, and held his lands together until he was ready to defend them with his own strong right hand.

He had reached manhood ; had won renown in many battles, and now it seemed good to his friends that he should take a wife, and dwell at home. But



he answered their entreaties with jest and laughter ; saying that his sword was his bride, and he would seek no other ; but there came a long winter when the land was at rest, for the people of Dietmers were quelled, and I, Horand, held the north country in peace, and Wat was sitting quiet in his burg of Sturm-land ; and King Hetel began to find his halls cold and lonely. So he spake with those of his kin who were near :

“ I have a mind to do what you have so oft counselled me ; but what maid is there among the Hegelings that is fitted to share my throne ? ”

They debated awhile among themselves, and at last Morung spake :

“ In truth there is none among our people whom we should desire for thee ; but in Ireland lives a maid who is the pearl of the earth ; if thou couldst win her thou wouldst have bliss all thy days. ”

“ Thou dost speak of Hilda, daughter of Wild Hagen. I have heard how many noble knights have perished for her sake ; and I will send none of my friends unto certain death, though she were a hundred times as fair, ” answered Hetel.

“ Perchance, ” said Morung, “ we might compass it without bloodshed. Send for thy kinsman Horand. He knows Hetel’s land, and will counsel thee what to do. ”

So Hetel sent to me in Daneland, saying that he desired a certain service of me, and would count on seeing me within seven days. Then I rode with sixty



men to Matalan, calling on the way for Frut ; and when we reached the castle the king came down to meet us, and asked how we fared, and if the lands were at peace.

“All is well,” spake Frut, “pirates fell upon the west coast after harvest ; but we worsted them and drove them back to their ships.”

The king thanked us ; and then leading us into a chamber, talked with us of many things before he broke the matter he had on his heart to us. At last he spake :

“Horand, is this all true that men say of the maid Hilda ? Is she indeed so fair ?”

I answered him :

“No fairer maid ever lived, and she is gentle and virtuous beyond compare.”

“How would it be,” he asked, “if I sent letters to her father by some of my most honourable knights ?”

“Hagen would hang them on the first tree, as he has done to a score of others. All who have asked for Hilda’s love have been beaten or hanged.”

“He would not dare to hang one of my servants,” answered Hetel, “he knows it would cost him dear. I greatly desire the maid, and would think no reward too great for him who should win her for me.”

“There is but one man living,” said Frut, “who could bring this to pass ; and he is Wat the Earl of



Sturmland. Let him come hither and confer with thee about it."

Straightway the king sent messengers to Wat. They found him sitting in the hall among his knights, and told him the king desired a certain service of him. At this he marvelled greatly, knowing that the land was in peace ; and asked if he should take his great axe, and what knights of his banner. They answered that the king desired to confer with him ; and he quickly arose and departed with twelve men for Matalan. Hetel, who had watched for him, beheld him approach, and went to meet him at Campatilla, about three furlongs from the castle ; for he bore Wat great love, seeing that he had been a father to him in his orphanage.

"Wat, good friend," he said, "thou art thrice welcome ! It seems years since thou and I took the field together. It is hard when good friends are long sundered."

Wat grasped his hands and said :

"Good friends should meet oft, that they may better defend themselves against treacherous enemies."

And he followed the king into the hall. When they were alone Hetel said :

"I sent for thee, because I want an ambassador into King Hagen's land ; and there is none who would discharge the errand with such honour as thou."

Wat answered :



“All I can do for the love of thee I will do right willingly as thou knowest. Trust me I will bring the matter to a happy end ; unless grim death stand in the way and baulk me.”

“Thanks, good friend,” answered Hetel, “know then that I am minded to wed Hagen’s daughter ; and one who knows the land well counselled me to send thee with my letters.”

“By my troth,” said Wat in great wrath, “he who counselled thee to that would not grieve much if I died this day. It is none other than Frut the Dane ; and I will take care that he bears me company on the errand.”

Thereupon the king sent for Frut and Horand.

“Thanks to you, brave knights, that ye rate my courage and loyalty so high,” said Wat. “Since ye are minded that I should run my neck into Hagen’s noose, I will take care that ye bear me company in the venture.”

I answered him that I would gladly go with him ; for I never counted aught burdensome that was done for the sake of a woman ; and when his wrath had cooled, we began to devise how we should set about our journey. Frut counselled stratagem.

“If Hagen knows whence we come he will not suffer us to land on his shores. Let the king therefore build a noble ship of cypress-wood, and furnish it with boats and galleys, that we may be safe from the ground swell. In the hold we will hide a hundred of our



proven men, seeing that in the end we may be compelled to take the maid by force. We will take with us a smaller ship, well filled with the richest stuffs of the East, and such things as best please women, and when we come to Ireland we will give out that we are merchants, and thus we shall obtain speech of Hagen and his daughter."

Hetel was well pleased with the plan, but Wat liked it not.

"I cannot play the merchant," he said, "and babble to the women. I never hoarded up my gold pieces, but loved to share them with knights who were poorer than myself."

"Here is my nephew Horand," said Frut, "who can dissemble so well that his nearest of kin should not know him. He shall stand in the booth and sell clasps and ouches to the maidens. For the men we will have rare weapons and coats of mail, and we will take with us noble steeds and furs of great price as presents to the king."

"But how," said Wat, "if Hagen finds you out. It will go hardly with you then ; for the folk say that he has the strength of twelve men, and none can escape from his hand."

"Trust me," answered Frut, "that I will hood-wink him, and he shall suspect no ill. He shall hear that we are noble knights whom Hetel has banished ; and that, being driven from our lands, we are forced to seek our bread as traders ; and he will straightway



offer us his protection and bid us to the court, where we shall get speech of the fair Hilda."

But Wat would not be persuaded, and stood out for a long time, until Hetel besought him earnestly, by the love he bore him, not to thwart the plan, seeing that he should know no rest nor peace till the fair Hilda became his wife. At last he yielded, and we began to consider when we should start, and fixed on the coming spring. Hetel straightway set carpenters and smiths to work to build ships and galleys down at the sea-shore, and prepared suits of armour and helmets for the knights who should go with us. We, who had to set our lands in order for a long absence, rode away home, leaving the king to order what was needed for the adventure. It was summer before the ships were ready. They were fair and stately vessels, the bows rich with gilding, the anchors inlaid with silver; the masts were chosen from a thousand pines, each straight and tall and without flaw. There were two galleys, and two smaller boats, besides a fifth which was to carry arms.

When the ships were all ready, Wat came from Sturmland with four hundred men; close behind him followed Morung leading two hundred spears, likewise Irolt and Frut, each well furnished with arms and men for the enterprise. When the knights were all assembled we picked out a hundred of the bravest and nimblest, whom we purposed to keep hid in the hold of the vessel, for we had little faith that Frut's



stratagem would bring us away with whole skins. All being in readiness to set sail, the king came down to the ships to bid us farewell ; and gave to each knight a helm and cuirass of shining steel, and surveyed the merchandise, which filled one of our largest ships. This done Hetel pointed out to Wat certain young squires of great promise, and prayed the old earl to give them his best counsels and help ; and Wat bade the king in his turn keep a hard fist for his foes, and a free hand for his knights ; and when these parting words had been spoken they embraced each other with much love, and the king quitted the ship.

He looked towards us earnestly as our boats bore away from land, and called :

“God be with you !”

To which I answered :

“Fear not ! We shall come back in safety and bring you a fair wife.”

Nevertheless I saw that he wore a sorrowful mien, and that he was doubtful of the issue of our journey.





## CHAPTER VIII.

### *Of Wild Hagen and his Court.*

THE wind blowing steadily from the east sped us swiftly over the sea, and in six and thirty days we reached Balyan, and, boldly entering the haven, anchored close to the pier.

The ship in which our knights were hidden remained a mile apart in the offing, that it might escape the prying eyes of the people ; but I, Horand, with Wat, Frut, and Irolt, appeared openly upon our deck in burgher apparel, and began a parley with the harbour master. Presently there came riding down to us the mayor, with the principal burghers, who had heard of our coming, and desired to know what we sought in their land, and whence we were come. To this Frut answered that we were foreign merchants come to trade in Ireland, and furthermore added that he would gratify him in all he desired to know ; but must first have safe conduct from King Hagen, that our lives and goods would be secure.

“ I see,” answered the mayor, “ that ye are strangers to Hagen’s rule, or ye would know there



lives not the man in Balyan who would dare to lay a finger on your goods. As for your lives, satisfy me that ye are good men and true, and I will speedily win you the king's leave to traffic in the town."

Thereupon Frut took him into the cabin, and shewed him the rich and precious wares we carried, at which his eyes sparkled with pleasure and surprise; and when he had drunk of our wine, he rode up to the burg promising us his good offices with the king. Hagen spake gracious words to us by his mouth.

"Tell the strangers," he said, "that they have my safe conduct, and the peace of my realm; and he who wrongs a hair of their heads shall swing upon the gallows."

We rejoiced at this message of the Irish king, and Frut straightway prepared costly presents for him and the queen, the like of which had never been seen in the kingdom before. I, Horand, with Irolt and Morung, was sent in charge of these presents, which were carried by twenty-four young squires attired as merchants. They made us pass through the knights' hall, in which sat many of the nobles playing at chess and dice; these marvelled greatly when they marked the thick beards and broad shoulders of our men, and an old warrior who sat among them, said aloud:

"By my troth those thews and muscles are well used to the spear and bow!"

Beyond this hall was the audience chamber, where



Wild Hagen sat : a man of noble presence, but fierce and hasty withal. We laid before him our gifts : firstly, twelve horses of pure Castilian blood, black as night, and bold as lions, which he beheld from the window overlooking the court ; secondly, twelve suits of armour damasked in rare patterns, cunningly wrought in silver, with shields of like fashion set in borders of gold.

After these came twenty rich coverlets for beds and settles, made of the fur of the black and yellow fox, with forty sable skins for trimming and edging the women's robes ; likewise skins of ermine and miniver for royal wear ; of these last more than a hundred, which caused Hagen's chamberlain to lift his hands in amazement, for he had never seen the skins in such plenty before.

For the queen we brought chains and ouches of gold, manchets and veils of rare workmanship, silver fringes and rolls of purple, and crimson silk of Damascus for coverlets and baldaquins. Hagen thanked us for our gifts, praising the horses and the armour ; the rest he delivered to his chamberlain, who looked them through, piece by piece, and then came to the king, saying :

"Of a truth the gifts these merchants have brought you are worth ten thousand marks."

"It is good," answered Hagen, "they shall not be without a recompense for their generosity. But now send my knights here, that I may divide these gifts with them."



When he had apportioned to each his share, he bade me and Irolt sit beside him, and asked whence we came ; saying that such rich merchants had not visited his land before.

To this we answered, as we had devised, that we were not merchants by birth, but nobles of good estate, who had been driven from our lands by our king, under whose anger we had fallen ; and that being loth to bear arms for a strange king, we had chosen to seek our bread as traders on the sea.

“Who is your king?” he asked, “methinks he cares little for his own honour, or he would strive to keep such brave and courteous men at his right hand.”

We answered that he was Hetel, king of the Hegelings ; and that we had held great estates under him before he had banished us in his wrath.

Hagen replied :

“It is well that ye have come into my land ; for I will give you honours and estates in place of those ye have lost, and ye shall dwell at my court.”

Irolt answered :

“If it came to Hetel’s ears that we had sworn fealty to another king he would not leave one of us alive on the face of the earth.”

“Fear not,” answered Hagen, “he would not dare to set foot in my realm, for he knows well that it would cost him his head. Take counsel, therefore, with your companions ; and if you will bear arms in



my service ye shall receive tenfold for all that which Hetel has taken from you."

Then calling the mayor, he bade him prepare suitable lodgings in the city, and told us that we were free to eat at his table with all our servants so long as we abode in Balyan; but in this we begged him to excuse us. When we reached the city we found forty houses thrown open to us; and having fixed our quarters, we slept soundly and safely all night.

Next morning we rose betimes and put up booths in the street before our lodgings, in which we spread out for sale 'all the rich and curious things we had brought. The city folks came to buy in crowds, the men being drawn thither by the armour and weapons, and the women by the furs and trinkets; and we suffered them to buy cheaply, to the end that we might get a good name among the people, and this especially pleased the women. Anon there came to us certain women from the castle, and some of Queen Hilda's waiting-maids, whom Morung entertained with jests and pleasant speeches, and sent away well satisfied, for he would take no pay for the things they chose, saying that their fair looks were a sufficient recompense. This he did at the bidding of the wise Frut, who knew the women would not fail to speak well of us to the queen and young Hilda, and thereby cause them to desire our presence at court. Evening drew near, but the people ceased not



to throng our booth ; the women, who were both fair and mirthful, held the younger knights in talk ; the men looked in wonder upon the Earl of Sturmland, who stood there beside the booth as if he were the king of the land (though he wore but a simple gaberdine), giving with both hands to all who desired it, for he could not use himself to chaffer and higgler. Just before nightfall there came to us a messenger from Hagen, bidding us all to feast with him on the morrow. On the morrow, therefore, we left the booths in charge of certain trusty men, and having dight ourselves gaily, went up to the burg. The chamberlain led us straightway into the presence of King Hagen, who was sitting with his queen in a pleasant chamber overlooking the sea. They received us with great honour ; Hagen came three steps to meet us, and the queen rose from her chair and greeted us graciously, saying :

“I have heard from my lord the king, how ye have suffered banishment, and are come to seek refuge in our land. Ye are right welcome. Have faith in us that we will entreat you honourably, and shield you from harm.”

Then she made us seat ourselves, and pages came and reached draughts of excellent wine and mead in beakers of gold, of which we all drank, while the king and queen conversed freely with us concerning our adventures. After a while the queen arose, but before she left the chamber reminded Hagen that he had



promised young Hilda she should have speech of the strangers ; whereupon Hagen bade her send a chamberlain to lead us into the maiden's presence. Anon there came to us one wearing a great gold chain, who led us into a chamber where sat young Hilda and her mother in the midst of their maids, all exceeding fair, and decked out richly with gold and jewels.

When young Hilda perceived Wat, she rose to greet him (in truth all men could see he was a hero of renown ; the very dogs in the court knew it), but with a timid look, as though she were afraid at the sight of the grey old earl ; and he, taking her hand, gave her a hearty kiss, according to the usage of the land ; but methought the fair maid relished it little, for his beard was an ell long, and flowed all over his breast. Nevertheless, she suffered us likewise to salute her, and with so sweet and modest an air that we were delighted, and rejoiced in our hearts that King Hetel had chosen her for his bride. The queen bade us all be seated, but we, knowing our duty, remained standing reverently before her chair.

After she had spoken with me a while she turned to Wat and asked if he were wont to sit with women, and how such diversion suited him.

"If you would know the truth, fair mistress," answered he, "I would liever be at the head of some stout fellows laying about me in the battlefield."

At these words young Hilda and her maids laughed merrily ; and the queen made many pleasant jests



with him, seeming to take delight in his rough answers.

Then calling Morung aside, she said :

“How is the grey-beard named? Has he a wife at home? I warrant she gets few soft words from him.”

To this Morung answered :

“He has wife and child, and broad lands of his own, with many bondmen ; but he has been a brave sword from his youth upwards, and never loved to sit in peace at his own hearth. For years he was the king’s shield and strength, shedding his blood as if it had been water, in defence of the land and the king’s rights.”

“Methinks,” said the queen, “he has received an ill recompense from his master, for, if I have heard aright, it is but for a slight matter the king has driven you from his land. Now it would please me and King Hagen well if you and your friends would abide with us ; and you should be second to none of our nobles in our esteem.”

Then she beckoned to Wat, and asked him if he were willing to bear arms for the King of Ireland ; to which he answered :

“I had wide lands and many castles in Sturmland, and above three hundred knights who sat daily at my table, all armed and mounted at my cost : it would not suit me to swear fealty to another king than Hetel ; and, if he repents him not, I will go and seek adventures on the sea.”



So saying, he rose to depart, and we all followed him, first making obeisance to the queen and young Hilda, who desired that we would not fail to visit them each day. We marvelled not a little that Wild Hagen let us see his daughter thus freely, for no young knight nor page was suffered to come near the quarter where she dwelt; and men spake in the city how but three months before he had slain a young man of noble blood for having sung a little love song beneath her window.

It might be that he thought us too old to smite the maiden's fancy; or deemed rightly that our hearts were firmly fixed on the wives and children we had left at home. After leaving the queen's presence we went into the great hall where the knights were assembled for the mid-day meal. King Hagen sat at the head of the table which stood on the dais, at which we also were permitted to eat, having for company the chief nobles. The king pledged us with gracious speeches, as did his knights likewise; and there was abundance of wit and pleasant discourse during the feast. When the meal was ended we went down into the court, and, the day being hot and sunny, we sat under the mulberry trees which grew there, while the younger knights disported themselves on the smooth turf which covered the greater part of the enclosure.

Hagen, sitting under a baldaquin of purple and gold, looked on the sports with great content; and in truth his men shewed exceeding strength and swiftness,



fighting with cudgels and single-sticks, wrestling, playing at quoits, and proving themselves well skilled in all manly games. Anon two knights, who had been sitting near us playing chess, arose and engaged each other with sword and buckler, and shewed rare mastery of the weapon, winning loud spoken praises from the king and likewise from Frut and Morung.

Wat, who excelled all men on earth in the sword play, spake not a word, but sat gnawing his beard, while his fingers tingled to handle the well-beloved hilt. It chanced that Hagen said to him :

“Have you any in your country who can shew such prowess as these heroes of mine?”

This chafed the old earl; he laughed grimly to himself, and then answered the king :

“These sports have been somewhat strange to mine eyes of late, but I would gladly accustom my arm to them again.”

“You shall have your desire,” answered Hagen ; “my best sword-master shall come and fence with you; and, I warrant, you shall find the cunning feints and strokes he will teach you of good service in the fight.”

“Thanks, noble king,” answered Wat ; “I would richly pay any man who would be master to me.”

Presently there came the sword-master followed by a lad bearing weapons; and Wat stood up, and put himself on his guard as if he were a novice, while Frut laughed silently behind his beard.



When the sword-master had delivered his instructions in a loud voice, he raised his weapon, and made a stroke at Wat, who warded it off with great swiftness; the sword-master followed it up with another and another, but could gain no advantage over his scholar; and Hagen clapped his hands and praised Wat's dexterity.

Then the master bade him practise the attack; but the word was no sooner spoken than Wat sent him bounding about the court like a roebuck in the woods, plying him with rapid strokes that flashed like the north-lights through the sky, and drew showers of sparks from his buckler, until he, being an old man, was fairly out of breath, and lowered his weapon's point to the earth.

"By my troth," said he, "this is an apt scholar."

Wild Hagen was well pleased with Wat's play, and said :

"Give me my sword, and I will make pastime with the Earl of Sturmland; and seeing he is so brave and dexterous a knight, I will teach him my three strokes;" for the Irish knights made use of certain passes which they called King Hagen's strokes.

At this Wat laughed again quietly, but before they set on each other, he said :

"Give me your word, King Hagen, that you will fight only in sport, for I should shame if the queen and her maids, who are looking from the windows above, beheld me bleeding from your blows."



Hagen gave him his word, and then fell to and dealt him fierce and heavy blows, while Wat kept on his guard. So they went on for a space, fencing with a nimbleness that astonished the beholders, for they were both burly and of great girth; but presently Hagen began to sweat and smoke like a brand that has been quenched with water, for the old earl led him a cunning dance round the court, meaning to weary him out. At last they were forced to pause, and when they had breathed awhile, Wat said :

“Now I have learned your three strokes, and give you my best thanks for them.”

By my troth, he gave him such thanks as if he had been a wild Saxon or Frank, for he drove him up and down the turf like lightning, battering his shield and cuirass with such rapid and well-aimed blows that the bystanders began to tremble.

He would assuredly have brought the king to the ground, but Hagen, who had no mind to be worsted before his knights, withdrew from the encounter. After a while he said to Wat :

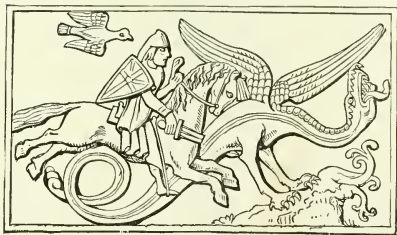
“You professed that you desired to learn the use of sword and buckler. God preserve me from such novices. You have learned in an hour what others could not master in years.”

“King,” said the open-browed Irold, “Wat has long been a master of the weapons. In our own land we practise each day with sword and buckler.”



“Had I known that,” said Hagen, “I would not have taught him my three strokes.”

But he laughed nevertheless, and the courtiers laughed with him; and straightway the squires began other games, throwing stones and flinging spears, in which we joined them, and thus passed the rest of the afternoon in much merriment.







## CHAPTER IX.

*How sweetly Horand sang.*

AFTER the evening meal the Irish knights began to sing roundelays, and bade us likewise sing in praise of our fair ones, whereupon I sang to them the songs of our own land. They pleased the king and his knights greatly, and the queen, who was sitting at an open window enjoying the evening air, sent down her chamberlain to ask which of the strangers had so sweet a voice. Moreover I was bidden into her bower, and she thanked me for having made the evening pass so pleasantly with my songs, and desired that I should come and sing for her again on the morrow eve.

“Mistress,” I answered, “I am at your command at all times, to sing my best for your pleasure.”

She appointed me to come about the vesper ; but I rose before daybreak and took my harp, and sang at the foot of the tower where young Hilda slept with her mother. I was in my prime then, and could sing many a sweet song that only blooms in the days



of youth, like the flowers that spring in May, like the merry songs of the birds which grow so still when the chill autumn winds blow. The sun rose while I was singing, and I saw that the queen and Hilda were listening at the window ; also Wild Hagen and his knights, which I had not desired, and whereat I greatly marvelled.

“There was little marvel in it,” broke in Frut. “Thou knowest, Horand, that the very cattle left their green pastures to hearken ; the little gold beetles stopped running among the grass, the fishes ceased to shoot about in the brooks. He sang long hours, and it seemed but a brief moment. The very church-bells sounded sweet no longer ; the folk left the choir-songs of the priests and ran to hear him. All who heard his voice were heart-sick after the singer, so grand and sweet was the strain.”

I sang ; enough of praise ; and, when I had ceased, young Hilda ran to her father, and said to him :

“Command the stranger knight that he may sing to me in my chamber. I could hearken to him all day and all night.”

“Daughter,” answered Wild Hagen, “these guests of mine are haughty, and will only do what they list. He would not sing for thee if I offered him a thousand marks.”

This he said with cunning ; for he had no mind that I should see his daughter again. That night, about the gloaming, there came a page to me, who led



me with secrecy into young Hilda's chamber, where she was sitting with two of her women.

"Sing for me the strain I heard at daybreak," she said, "I long to hear your voice. It is a charm against all care and sorrow."

Then I began the Lay of Amilee, and it touched her young heart sadly and sweetly ; and when I had ceased she gave me her soft white hand, more precious than gold, and said :

"Friend, have thanks. When I have a realm and castles of my own, you shall be rich and fear no enemy."

Then she offered me gold.

"No, mistress," I answered, "I have gold enough and to spare ; but give me the girdle from your waist, that I may carry it to my master as a token."

"Who is your master ?" she asked. "Is he a king ? Truly I owe him somewhat for your sake, sweet singer."

"Mistress, I never saw a king who could compare with him. He is young and comely and brave ; and loves you, moreover, with all his heart. He has sent us, his four near kinsmen, to offer you his crown and lands. Give us a gracious message for him, that he may know our errand was not in vain."

"I would flee with you," she answered, "but I dare not for my father. He would slay you if he knew you had spoken with me of this."

"Fair maiden, in our ship's hold a hundred trusty knights lie hidden. Come with me on board,



and trust to our good swords to keep off your father's men."

When she heard these words she pondered a while, and suddenly there entered into the room an old chamberlain who had the right of going in and out at his pleasure. Her women were afraid when they saw him.

"Who is this knight sitting here?" he asked; then he demanded of me wherefore I had entered the maiden's room, saying:

"Those who led you here have betrayed you to death. Know that your life is forfeit."

"Peace," said young Hilda, "there is no harm done an thou wilt but hold thy prate. Lead the good knight back to the postern. He deserves no ill turn for having sung so sweetly."

"Is this the knight of whom the people talk?" he asked. "When I dwelt in the Hegelings' land I knew a youth who sang better than any on earth—my sister's son, Horand by name, as proper a knight as any thy father has at his court."

"Look at this knight," said Hilda, "and see if it be not thy nephew."

Then he looked in my face, and knew me, and fell on my neck. As I wot well he would not thwart us for the sake of the love he bore King Hetel, I confided to him our purpose, beseeching him to aid us to carry off the maiden.

This however he would not do, being a fearful old



man, and knowing it would cost him his life if the king discovered he had been on our side ; but he promised to keep silence, and do naught that might mar our plans.

In the night the wise Frut bethought himself of a cunning plot which should bring the maid into our hands, with her father's free consent. Accordingly Wat went up to court next morning, and besought Wild Hagen to give us leave to depart.

"Behold," said the king, "what love I have shewn you, yet you reject the lands and gold I have proffered you, and despise my service."

"Our king has sent for us ;" replied Wat, "he has repented him, and seeks our aid and friendship ; and, moreover, our hearts are weary for those we left at home."

"If you have set your minds on going," said Hagen, "take with you the best horses from my stables, and a measure of gold, as a recompense for the rich gifts you have bestowed upon me."

"I have a burg and lands at home," answered Wat, "and need not your wealth ; but we desire that you should show us favour in one thing ; that you should break bread with us aboard our ships ; and if the queen and her daughter would ride down with you we should hold it great honour ; and we could tell our master how the mightiest in the land had given us company to the shore."



“That will I gladly do,” answered Hagen. “My wife and daughter, and a hundred ladies of the court shall come down with me at early morning, and see the ships put off from land.”

Then Wat returned and told us the maid would be aboard at early morning; and bade us get all in readiness. The knights, who had been hidden in the vessels, armed themselves from head to foot, and we drew on coats of mail under our garments of peace, and laid our weapons in readiness; knowing that Wild Hagen would not let his maid go without a hard struggle.







## CHAPTER X.

*How young Hilda was carried off by the Hegelings.*

ON the morrow, after matins, Hilda and her mother rode down with the king to the shore, followed by a great train of knights and dames. They came aboard our largest ship, where we had spread a feast for them, and ate and drank with great merriment, pledging us with good wishes for our voyage.

When the meal was ended, the king took a boat and sailed round the ships, and Hilda and her daughter came into our booth, that they might see the precious ouches of gold which we offered them as a parting gift. While the queen handled the veils and jewels with delight, considering which she should choose, we brought young Hilda, with six of her favourite maidens who knew our intent, swiftly and secretly to a ship that lay close at hand. The anchors had been raised, and the sails set, while we parleyed with Hagen, and the ship now began to move quickly out to sea. The queen, who had made her choice of the stuffs, presently left the booth, and looked round for her daughter. When she saw the



ship moving off with the maiden, she set up a great cry, and her women likewise began to scream, so that the tumult reached the ears of Wild Hagen, where he sat in his galley a little way off in the harbour. Thereupon he made haste towards the shore, and beheld the fray aboard the ship, and saw the knights who had followed young Hilda flung off into the sea by our young knights, who now sprung from their hiding-place. While he still gazed in wonderment, the ship bore away, all sails set, the deck covered with men in glittering armour. Perceiving that he was betrayed, though he knew not how, he seized an oar and began to pull with all his might ; shouting to his rowers that he would give them great rewards if they brought him up to the ship. At this Morung, who stood upon the poop, began to laugh, and called out :

“ Wherefore in such haste, King Hagen ? If you had a thousand knights we would cool their courage in the brine.”

These mocking words made him furious ; but seeing that it was hopeless to follow the ship, he made for the shore, where the queen still stood, wringing her hands and crying that her daughter was stolen, and that she should see her no more.

Meanwhile the rest of our ships got clear of the harbour, save that which waited for Wat of Sturmland, who, with Irolt, was hard beset by the Irish knights about the queen. By desperate valour they fought their way from the booth down to the strand, closely



followed by their foes, who strove to lay hands on Wat, to make him prisoner as a hostage for young Hilda. But he, by his great strength, freed himself from their hands, and leaped from the pier into a boat which lay moored below ; Irolt followed him ; and the twain seized the oars which lay in the boat and began to row towards their ship. Wild Hagen being now close to the land called to the folk to seize the traitors, and roared for his gerstang, swearing that all who were left behind should die. Two hundred knights, all bearing arms, had come down with him, and the people in the city, who had armed themselves on seeing the fray, put off to his aid in boats. Some of these essayed to clamber up the sides of our ship, while others kept up a shower of spears and arrows that wounded many of us sorely ; but we manned the sides of the vessel, and threw our foes back into the sea, while the mariners strove to set the sails and lift the anchors. After a while we began to move, and Hagen foamed with rage when he perceived that we should escape him. He flung his gerstang at Wat as we slipped past ; by good luck the rocking of the boat fouled his aim, but the weapon lighted on the rudder and cleft it nearly in twain. Despite this we escaped, for the wind blew strong from the shore, and drove us towards Matalan, so that we soon overtook the other vessel bearing the maiden.

Thus far had Horand spoken when King Hetel



came into the tent, and they saw that his face was white with grief.

“God greet ye, noble knights ! I have had a messenger from Matalan, who has brought me ill news. The town is sacked, the fields laid waste, my ships are burned, my castle plundered !”

All the knights were silent with grief and amaze ; and after a while Herwig said :

“We must hasten home on the morrow, that we may lead Gudrun and her mother to a place of safety, and punish these robbers.”

“Woe is me !” said Hetel, “how shall I tell the evil news ! Gudrun is carried into captivity.”

“Where were thy knights and kinsmen that they suffered this ?” asked Herwig. “Did they not swear to guard the women as their own lives ?”

“They have all perished by the sword : my halls are red with their blood. There is not a man alive in Matalan save the bed-ridden and helpless.”

“Who has done this ?” asked Wat.

“Ludwig of Normandy and his son Hartmut,” answered the king. “My steward has come even now, and brings me the ill news from the queen’s mouth. Guests came to Matalan ; whence no man knew ; but my people opened the gates to them, and bade them welcome. They gave them good wine in plenty ; and after they had eaten and drunk they appeared before Hilda and Gudrun. The queen bade them declare what they might desire of her ;



upon which the strangers said, 'Hartmut, son of Ludwig of Normandy, sent us here with an errand to the maid Gudrun, thy daughter. He seeks her hand in marriage.' 'Good messengers,' he said, 'go to the maid Gudrun, and tell her that Hartmut of Normandy offers her his lands and his crown. If she will be gracious to me I will exalt her above all other queens; and she shall rule in peace and honour at Cassian to the end of her days.' 'God forbid!' answered Gudrun. 'Tell the brave Hartmut that I can never wear his crown. My troth is plighted to King Herwig, whom I chose willingly to be my husband, as he chose me to be his wife; and I will look on none other as long as I live.' Then one of the messengers answered, 'Bethink you, noble maid, how it may fare with you and your kin if you deny Hartmut's suit. He has sworn to lead you home with him, and ere long you will see him before Matalan with his knights.' At this the queen and those with her laughed aloud, deeming this speech an empty threat; whereupon the messengers turned to depart. The queen offered them gifts, which they refused: and my knights, with mocking looks, bade them pledge my health in a parting cup. 'If ye will not drink King Hetel's wine,' they said, 'we will pour you out blood. We fear little the hate of the Normans, and desire nothing better than to meet them on the battle-field.' And they flung mocking speeches after them, and all the people laughed and made sport at Hartmut's



threats, unwitting that the Norman wolves were at the door. They were all sleeping in peace when Ludwig and Hartmut landed with a mighty host. My warriors defended the burg stoutly, but they were slain one after another, and Gudrun was carried captive to Normandy. Hilda sits mourning in Matalan with many weeping widows, whose daughters have likewise been carried off by the Normans."

When Herwig heard these tidings he could not restrain his tears, and the other knights likewise wept with the king; all save Wat, who growled:

"Away with tears! They may do for women, but ill beseem valiant men. The mischief is done; and we must bethink us how we can best turn the tables and repay Ludwig for his evil deeds."

"What dost thou counsel?" asked Herwig.

"First, peace with Siegfried. We will deal gently with him that he may join us with his men, and pursue these robbers upon the sea."

"Thou dost counsel wisely," said Frut. "To-morrow therefore we will make a fresh assault. Perchance the gate will yield, and Siegfried may be willing to make peace on our terms."

So at day-break they assailed the burg; and the great gates trembled and split at the shock.

Siegfried himself stood behind the gate, and when Irolt saw him, he said:

"Will you make peace with us, king of Moorland?"



"Yea, if ye will deal honourably with us," answered Siegfried; "else my warriors shall yet do you much harm."

Hereupon Frut spake :

"You shall pledge your word to do us a certain service, an honourable and knightly one ; and when the word is given you shall leave the walls scot free."

Siegfried was right glad to make peace with the Hegelings, and straightway rode down to meet King Hetel, who told him what had befallen at Matalan ; and that he should aid him to pursue Hartmut on the sea. Siegfried promised him help, and they all conferred together how they should pursue the Normans.

"I know the water-track," said Wat. "If we had ships we could overtake them before they reach Cassian."

"Where shall we find ships?" said Hetel. "If we go home we shall not overtake the Norman till he is safe in his walls, where he may keep us waiting a long year or more."

"God himself has sent us help," said Wat. "I saw this morning ten ships lying in a little harbour close at hand. They belong to pilgrims who have put in here for water. We will demand them, and if they will not sell them we will take them by force."

Thereupon the knights went down to the strand, and found the pilgrims eating and drinking upon the shore, having laid their arms aside. The poor folk were all dismayed when they saw the knights, and when they

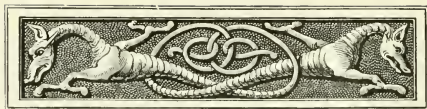


would have fled to their boats they found they had been seized by armed men ; whereupon they lamented bitterly, seeing that they could not return to their own land. Horand offered them gold, promising that they should have their boats back in a few days ; but they flung the gold down upon the sand, calling on Christ to punish those who had robbed them. Horand would fain have restored their vessels, but Wat would not suffer it.

“Give them their garments and stuff from the ships,” he said, “and bid them wait here patiently, and pray for our good luck.”

“Wot ye,” said the oldest of the pilgrims, “the great wrong ye are doing ? These ships were built for men of peace, and blessed by the good priests, who consecrated them for ever to their peaceful office, which is to carry those who seek their souls’ weal to the Holy Shrine ; therefore it is foul sacrilege that ye shall profane them by deeds of blood.” The others likewise begged the knights to leave their vessels in peace, but Wat would not be entreated. Ere long the ships were filled with armed men ; the wind arose in the east, and, swelling the sails, carried them swiftly on the track of the Normans.





## CHAPTER XI.

### *The Fight at Waleis.*

THE sea was still, the night was cloudless, and many of the warriors remained upon the deck of the vessel discoursing sorrowfully of the things which had befallen Matalan. Herwig sat apart full of woe. King Hetel and the Earl of Sturmland steered the ship which sailed in the van. Ortwin and the others gathered round Horand, and besought him to finish the tale of Hetel's wooing; and the good knight, willing to beguile their hearts from the sorrowful tidings they had heard, spake thus :

After we got clear of the harbour at Balyan we fared prosperously many days; but when we reached Waleis, which lay between Ireland and our own country, we fell in with contrary winds and boisterous weather, and were forced to put ashore to save our lives. We landed on a pleasant patch of heathery ground, which at that season was decked with lilies and asphodels, and there we encamped until the wind should veer to the west. For Hilda and her maids we put up a large tent of silk which King Hetel had



given us, wherein they abode safe from the storm, well pleased to rest after the troubles of the sea ; and when the sun shone they wandered about upon the heath plucking flowers and winding them into garlands and posies, with which they dressed their hair. Meanwhile we waited anxiously for a change in the wind, but when the gale veered, a great tempest blew so that we dared not put out with the maidens.

Nevertheless the brave Irolt and one of his men set forth in a small boat, that they might find King Hetel, who had appointed to meet us at Waleis. After much battling with the waves they came upon his ship in a little bay five leagues to the eastward, and told him how we awaited him in the harbour at Waleis with King Hagen's daughter.

At this news his heart was filled with gladness ; he tarried not an instant, but mounting his horse set forth overland to seek us, for the tempest still raged upon the sea. Irolt had been gone three days, and we began to fear evil had befallen him, when towards sunset we heard the blast of a trumpet among the hills, and presently saw King Hetel riding towards us with a thousand of his knights, Irolt being at his right hand. The Earl of Sturmland went forth to meet him, and when Hetel espied him he sprang from his horse and embraced him.

"Faithful friend," he said, "I have lived in fear that thou and all my people had perished in Hagen's land."



"We were hard pushed to escape with our lives," answered Wat. "Wild Hagen is a sturdy tyke ; nevertheless we got off with little hurt, and have brought thee the fairest maid the world ever saw."

Thereupon they drew near Hilda's tent, and the maid came forth, and Irolt led her to the King, and she made obeisance to him as her lord and husband. Hetel kissed her sweet lips, and saluted her with loving words ; gazing with wonder upon her beauty, for her looks were other than those of the Hegeling women, her hair and eyelashes being raven black. After they had conversed a while they went forth with the knights and maidens upon the heath, and the wind having fallen we sat there in the sun the rest of the evening, singing and jesting with great content ; and our young knights who were not yet wed chose themselves sweet-hearts among Hilda's maids. The night passed quietly ; and at daybreak, the wind favouring us, we made ready to set sail. Suddenly Hetel cried that he saw a sail in the west, and bade Frut climb the rock that he might learn what manner of vessel it was.

Presently Frut came back saying :

"There is a fleet of ships bearing down upon us. Wild Hagen is come to seek his daughter."

"It may be that he will not see us," spoke Hetel ;  
"nevertheless we will make ready for battle."

Straightway he led Hilda and her maids into a place of safety ; and then bade his knights arm themselves and gather round him ready for aught that



might befall. Scarcely had we donned our mail before we saw Hagen's ship steering straight for our harbour, with many others, all full of armed men.

Hetel, swift as lightning, put his men in battle array near the landing, and cried :

"Stand firm before Hagen. This is the day when the landless shall be made rich, and the rich shall win great honour."

By this time Hagen's ship was close to the shore, and we saw how the king stood there with a terrible countenance, shaking his glaive at us, and swearing that he would kill every one of the robbers who had stolen his daughter. Then, without waiting until the ship reached the land, he sprang neck-deep into the waves, sword in hand, and many of his knights followed him. Hetel's men encountered them with a rain of darts and arrows ; then, rushing down to the water's edge, they met the Irish hand to hand. There was a shock of stout ashen spears and a clash of swords, and the water grew red with blood. Hagen hewed his way to the top of the hill upon which King Hetel stood, and dared him to fight ; but he, unwilling to assail the father of his beloved, sought his match elsewhere, leaving the trusty Irold to encounter the Irish king. My troth, the good knight fought bravely ; but how should he have prevailed against Wild Hagen, who had the strength of six men in each arm ?

Nevertheless he dealt the Irish king a deep wound



in the side which bled amain ; whereupon Hagen turned on him with the fury of a wild boar, and had nigh cleft his skull in twain with his sword, but Irolt's squires, seeing him thus hard beset, flung themselves before him, and warded off the death stroke ; for which good service they paid with their lives ; for Hagen, seeing himself baulked of their master's life, turned upon them like a lion, and seizing his axe with both hands, felled them down one after the other as though they had been sheep in the hands of a butcher ; and they never went home to tell how they fared in the fight at Waleis. Then brandishing his bloody axe, he looked round him for a fresh foe ; but our men were seized with dismay, and shrunk back, leaving a clear space all round him. Those who were behind assailed him with arrows and spears, which fell upon his greaves and buckler as thick as hailstones. He heeded them as little as an April shower ; and, shaking his sword aloft, he cried :

“Where is the Earl of Sturmland, who proved himself a traitor and a liar ?”

Wat, hearing these words, called out that he was ready to meet him.

The cunning Frut, seizing him by the arm, said :

“Mark this well. Hagen may have the strength of twelve men, but he is short-winded : see how he pants.”

“If he have the strength of twenty men,” answered Wat, “I will grapple with him.”



And he stepped forward and stood face to face with Wild Hagen. The king's visage grew white with wrath when he beheld the old earl ; nevertheless he laughed loudly, which was his wont when he was greatly angered, and said :

“Well met, my simple scholar ! Now thou shalt prove Hagen's three strokes.”

Wat marked his exceeding fury, and rejoiced thereat, for he knew he would be less cunning and cautious in fence, and would more speedily grow weary ; therefore he used his shield so skilfully that all the strength and fury of the Irish King were of no avail. After a while Hagen began to pant for breath, and Wat, perceiving his distress, assaulted him with fast and furious strokes, wounding him in many places, so that his mail was covered with the blood that flowed from his wounds.

The others, who had ceased fighting, stood around watching the combat ; and when the Irish saw that their king was wounded, they set up wild cries of grief, and strove to succour him, but the Hegelings drove them back, and Hagen was left in Wat's hands. In truth he had cause to rue that he had boasted of his three strokes, for Wat speedily disabled his right arm, and then gave him a blow on the head with his battle-axe which felled him to the ground.

Now Hilda when she heard her father's voice could no longer rest in her hiding-place, but came



forth and stood on the top of the hill whence she could behold the fight.

Anon she heard the Hegelings shout, "King Hagen is fallen," and her heart smote her bitterly at these words. She ran down the hill, and presently encountered King Hetel, who, being badly wounded, had suffered his men to lead him from the field.

"Help me, King!" she cried. "Save my father! Woe is me, I have betrayed him unto death!"

Hetel was filled with pity when he beheld her affliction: he kissed her and spake words of comfort; bidding her be of good cheer, for her father was still alive. He promised her that she should straightway have speech of him, and then bade his men lead him to where King Hagen lay.

Hilda followed a little way behind, not daring to shew herself to her father, and moaning and weeping that she might not go to him. Hetel perceived that the Irish knights had bound up their king's wounds, and that he was beginning to come to himself; thereupon he cried out:

"King Hagen make peace with us for the sake of your honour!"

"Who talks to me of peace?" said Hagen.

"It is I, Hetel, King of the Hegelings."

"You stole away my daughter with lies and cunning: and I would have repaid you well but for this sturdy Wat of Sturm-land," cried Hagen.

"Wherefore should you deny her to me?" asked



Hetel. "I love her as my life. When she is my queen she will have rich lands and many knights at her bidding. Make peace with us for her sake."

"Let there be peace for to-night," said Hagen ; "seeing that I can no longer wield a sword."

And he suffered his men to carry him to a tent. Hilda followed him at a distance, lamenting that she might not go to him and embrace him. Hetel strove to comfort her ; but she wept the more .

"Woe is me ! I have caused my father's death ; my mother will die of sorrow, and all the land will curse me."

Presently there came one to Hagen, saying :

"Thy daughter weeps outside because she may not come near thee to bind up thy wounds."

"Suffer her to come in," he said ; and she entered timidly, having no security in her heart that he would not smite her for her treachery. But he only said :

"Thou art welcome, fair daughter ; I am glad to see thee in this strange country," and suffered her to kiss him. The blood gushed through the bandages of his wounds ; and she saw that he was falling into a swoon. Thereupon she went to seek Wat, for she knew he was a cunning leech, having learned healing from a fairy woman in his youth. She found him stooping under some bushes, gathering herbs by the light of a lantern, and besought him to heal her father's wounds.

"I am no chirurgeon," said Wat.



"I know thou canst heal wounds more swiftly than the best of the leeches," she said ; and besought him on her knees.

"Let thy father swear friendship to Hetel," answered the earl. "I will not come near him till he has made peace. The sands are wet with the blood of my own people. Wherefore should I waste the hour in ministering to mine enemies?"

Nevertheless he gave her some herbs and roots, and bade her make a plaister of them, and lay them on the king's wounds, that the blood might be staunched. At daybreak the chief knights on both sides went out to view the field : and they found three hundred slain of the Hegelings, and above four hundred of the Irish. Thereupon the Irish knights entreated Hagen to make peace ; saying that Hetel had shewn himself a valiant sword, and that the maid would never win a better husband. Hilda likewise entreated her father ; and after a while he yielded to their prayers, and suffered Hetel to come to him ; and when they had conferred awhile Hagen swore peace with him, and gave him his right hand, and promised that Hilda should become his wife. We abode at Waleis until our wounds were healed, and then set out in peace and friendship for Matalan, wherè Hagen saw the great wedding feast, and beheld his daughter crowned.

He sojourned twenty days at Matalan, receiving kingly cheer at the hands of Hetel and his folk. All his knights likewise, down to the least of them,



received of Hetel's riches ; and to each of the chief men he gave a suit of mail of great price, and a gray Danish charger with a long tail sweeping to its hoofs.

When the parting came, Hilda and all her maids wept sorely. Wild Hagen bade them be of good comfort, and said to Hetel :

“ Cherish them, for they are far from their fathers' land ; and find them good husbands when time serves.”

To the maids he said :

“ Be true to your mistress, and forget not ye were born in Ireland.”

Hetel and Hilda he blessed, saying :

“ Rule the land wisely, that I and the queen may hear you are beloved of the people.”

Then he bowed himself to Hetel, and kissed Hilda, and she saw her father's face no more. And when he reached his own land he told the queen what had befallen ; how peace and love had grown from the bloody warfare, and they both rejoiced that Hilda was Hetel's wife.

Here Horand made an end of speaking ; and the warriors betook themselves to sleep, praying that the morning might shew them the ships of their foes.





## CHAPTER XII.

### *The fight on the Wulpensand.*

WHILE Hetel and Herwig were hastening to deliver Gudrun, the maid with her companions abode on the Wulpensand.

It was a lonely island, where the screaming seagulls built their nests and the wild winds blustered both summer and winter.

Ludwig and Hartmut put into harbour for fresh water; and finding the place solitary and secure they abode there seven days, that they might rest their sea-wearied limbs and repair their vessels which had been battered by the storms.

They found wildfowl and hares upon the island; and having shot some of these with their arrows, they kindled fires and roasted them, and then feasted in the open air, making merry with wine and song, and rejoicing in all the woe they had wrought in the land of the Hegelings.

Meanwhile the poor maids fasted and wept within their tents, bemoaning day and night their captivity, and the near friends they had lost.



In vain did the courteous Hartmut send them the choicest morsels, and entreat them to come forth into the sunshine; they would not taste the dainties he set before them; and when they came out of their tents they stood sadly gazing towards the east, hoping to see some sign of their kinsmen, who, they doubted not, would come to deliver them. But seven days passed, and they saw neither mast nor sail in the east; and they began to think that King Hetel knew not what had befallen them, or was unable to follow them for lack of ships. On the eighth day the Normans made ready to quit the island. They had shipped their arms and treasures, and were leading their horses on board, when one who watched upon the cliffs cried out that he saw a sail in the distance. Thereupon the keen-eyed Hartmut swiftly climbed the rocks that he might learn the truth with his own eyes. Anon he shouted.

“I see a fleet of many small ships with the holy cross upon their sails.”

“It is the pilgrims,” answered Ludwig, “who are journeying to the Holy Shrine.”

“They are bearing towards us,” said Hartmut. “The sails grow larger before mine eyes.”

“It may be that they will touch upon this island to lay in fresh water,” answered Ludwig. “Now I see of a truth that those are pilgrim ships.” He spake truly; but those who manned the ships carried no cross save that on the sword’s hilt; and they were



skilled in hewing red crosses on the bodies of their foes.

Scarcely had Ludwig spoken when he saw helmets and spears blinking from the sides of the ships.

"By my troth," he cried, "those pilgrims like me not! King Hetel is upon us!" Then he called to his men: "Normans, arise and fight with the Danes hand to hand at the landing!" The Normans swiftly seized their arms and donned their mail, and when the ships neared the shore the Hegelings saw their foes standing like a hedge of steel along the strand.

Hetel and his men swarmed from the boats, burning for the fight and heedless of the showers of darts and arrows that fell upon them. The fierce Normans ran breast high into the waves to meet them, and fought them hand to hand.

The rocks echoed the clash of steel, the whirr of arrows and the cries and groans of the wounded, many of whom perished in the foaming waves and were carried out by the ebb-tide. The wild birds, which dwelt in multitudes on the island, were disturbed by the din of the fight; and flew in clouds overhead shrieking and clamouring like human creatures.

Wat of Sturmland sprang neck-deep into the waves, shouting to his men to follow him. King Ludwig marked his daring, and threw a sharp spear at him. It struck on his breastplate and flew up into the air in splinters, rebounding like a ball from a rock. The old Earl staggered under the stroke, but repaid Ludwig well,



for when he gained the shore he fell upon him so fiercely with his sword, that he pierced his cuirass through, and would have reached his heart but for a quilted vest he wore under his armour. Herwig of Zealand had nigh perished in the waves, for the Normans, seeing by his helm that he was a man of note, sought to drown him by flinging spears at his head the while he struggled in the sea. Twice he sank, but got to his feet again ; and catching the weapons on his buckler, which he held high above his head, cut himself a path through his foes with his right arm. His men followed close behind : after them came the Moorlanders and their King, who made a stand against Ludwig and his knights, while King Hetel and Horand strove to fight their way to the tent where Gudrun was held captive. Hartmut with his best men guarded the way, and the valour of the Hegelings seemed of no avail. The Normans stood like a rock, filling swiftly each gap that Hetel's sword made in their ranks. They fought until sundown, but neither prevailed. The sands were wet with slaughter, the sea was red with gore where it licked the edges of the bloody field ; but still the battle raged, and did not abate until darkness fell upon the land, and the warriors could no longer tell friend from foe. Being thus compelled to cease fighting, they withdrew to about a spear's throw from each other, and encamped for the night. The Hegelings, having laid aside their armour, went down to the waves' edge to cool their hot



hands and brows in the water, and then stretched themselves upon the ground with their heads upon their shields, impatient for the morning light, which should enable them to begin the battle anew.

In a little while they were all asleep, but the wounded and those who watched with them ; and the whole island, which had been alive with the clash of steel, the whizzing of arrows, and the furious cries of the warriors, was now still as the grave, save for the murmur of the sea which had sunk to low water. About an hour after midnight, King Hetel, who could not sleep for his wrath, arose and wandered round the camp, when he suddenly espied Ludwig, who, with his helm unbound, was standing by a watchfire looking across to the camp of the Danes. At the sight of his enemy Hetel's anger kindled afresh, and he called through the night :

"Ho, thou King of Normandy ! I challenge thee for the morrow, and for life or death. Thou shalt not steal away my maid unpunished, nor my good gold from my cellars. Thou shalt reap thy reward for it as sure as that I am King Hetel."

"Idle words," answered Ludwig ; "I came openly over the seas to make war upon thee."

"What, King Ludwig ! Wouldest thou deny thy unknighly deeds ? When did kings make war on helpless women ? Thou knewest that I was away, and that the burg was unprotected. The she devil Gerlinta counselled thee to the evil deed."



"Tell me, Hetel, who stole away Hilda from her father's house? Dost thou think men have forgotten the story of Wild Hagen's daughter?"

"Shame to thee," answered Hetel. "Hilda was a free maid, and came to me willingly, but thou hast torn Gudrun from her home, knowing that she is betrothed to another."

"Aye, to a serf of Zealand hast thou given her, and denied her to a prince who could pour out a measure of gold for every measure of grain he has in his stores. Wherefore didst thou treat my messengers with scorn, and refuse thy daughter to Hartmut?"

"Gudrun shall never wed the son of a vassal, a false one to boot, who by right should have swung upon the gallows," answered Hetel. "I challenge thee for life or death, thou false Norman!"

"As soon as thou wilt," answered Ludwig, enraged at Hetel's bitter words. "Wherefore should we wait till the morrow? The Great Bear that shines yonder over the sea will lend my sword light enough to find its way to thy heart."

"So be it," said Hetel; "bring me my armour."

But Wat of Sturmland, the true old earl, stayed him.

"Trust not the Norman; he will deal thee a foul stroke in the darkness. Let the squires bring splinters of pine and kindle a great fire here on the beach between the two hosts."

So the squires brought pine-wood, and made a



great fire, which flamed up against the sky, making the whole shore light. And now the two kings, who had armed themselves, stepped up close to one another, and each measured his foe with angry eyes, clutching his sword with deadly purpose. In girth and stature they were as well matched as if they had been twins; from childhood they had hardened their sinews in hunting and battle; their fists were iron, their thews were steel; each had looked death in the face a hundred times. For a while they plied each other with swift sword strokes that flashed like lightning in the glare of the fire, but they were both so skilful in the use of the shield that neither could find a chance of hurting the other, and after a space they were forced to pause for breath. Hetel had got a cut in the arm from the hand of Hartmut while they were fighting before the tent, and this wound now began to bleed afresh, by which his right hand was weakened. Wat, perceiving this, besought him to leave off fighting, but he would not hearken to him; and, burning with the thirst for vengeance, he again fell upon Ludwig with great fury.

The Norman, cool and crafty, watched his opportunity, threw Hetel off his guard, and lodged his sword's point in the band of his helmet, almost bringing him to the ground. The band broke, leaving Hetel's head defenceless; whereupon he assailed Ludwig with his dagger, and drave it through his cuirass, wounding him close to the heart.



“Thy life or mine !” shouted Ludwig ; and snatch-  
ing his axe from his belt, he smote the king on his  
head, which was uncovered, and cleft his skull in  
twain, and he fell dead on the ground.







## CHAPTER XIII.

### *How Ludwig fled in the night.*

FOR a while the Hegelings stood like men of stone, unable to stir for amazement and grief. Wat was the first to move. Brandishing his axe, and roaring like a wild boar that feels the hunter's spear, he rushed on the Norman camp, and slew all before him, sleeping and waking. Him followed Herwig, Horand, and the rest of the knights, and did great slaughter on their foes, who, starting bewildered from their dreams, struck each other in the confusion. But the fire, which had burned brightly for a while, now suddenly went down, and left the warriors in darkness, so that they were forced to lay down their arms. The Hegelings went back to their camp, where they sat until morning, full of impatience for daylight, that they might avenge Hetel's death upon the Normans. Meanwhile Ludwig, who was sorely wounded, took counsel with Hartmut and his knights.

"Behold," he said, "how many dead lie around us! If we wait until the morrow we shall surely be worsted, and thou wilt lose both thy bride and thy



life, for I wot well the Earl of Sturm-land will not let us leave this island until he has avenged Hetel's death. Let us therefore steal away secretly before sunrise. The men shall light fires and make a tumult, so that the Hegelings may be deceived; meanwhile the women and treasures shall be carried secretly to the ships. A wind is rising in the east. If it holds good, we shall be safe at home with thy mother Gerlinta in two days."

Hartmut answered him not a word, for he liked the counsel ill; but the others extolled Ludwig's cunning, and straightway made ready to quit the place. Their goods and treasures they carried on biers, as though they were burying their dead, but these they left lying uncovered to the wolves and ravens, which was vile and against all knightly usage. Gudrun and her maids began to clamour when they were taken to the ships; whereupon Ludwig bade the knights muffle their faces, swearing he would drown them if they screamed; and the poor women, frightened by his threats, were fain to hold their peace. They were all brought aboard without noise, the sails were set, the anchors weighed, and the Normans got clear of the island before any of the Hegelings marked their purpose. In a little while the dawn began to whiten the east, the golden sun rose clear and bright from the waves, and Wat wound his horn and bade the Hegelings make ready to punish the slayer of their king. They armed themselves speedily, and then moved



towards the Norman camp. It was still as the grave. For a while they deemed that their foes slept, but presently they perceived with amazement that they were all fled. Some stranded boats were left on the shore, and garments and money which had been dropped in flight ; but of Gudrun and her companions there was no trace. Wat was wild with rage when he perceived that Ludwig had escaped him ; he ran through the camp like a she-bear that has lost her young, lamenting loudly the King's death, and that he had missed the vengeance which would have comforted his soul. Ortwin called the knights together, and counselled them to put to sea without loss of time, that they might overtake his father's slayers, but Frut stayed them.

"It is of no avail," he said, "they are thirty miles ahead by this time ; we shall not overtake them until they have reached Cassian, and how shall we encompass them in the stronghold?"

"Thou hast spoken wisely," said Horand. "It would be in vain for us to follow them ; for many of our best men lie dead, and the rest are sorely wounded. Let us therefore go back to Matalan, and abide the day when we can meet the Norman with a strong hand."

But this did not suit Wat and King Herwig, who were bent upon pursuing Ludwig on the sea. Frut and Irolt were of Horand's mind, and their counsels prevailed in the end ; and with a sorrowful mien they



began to make ready to quit the island. First they gathered together the bodies of the slain, who lay upon the sands and the rocks as thick as forest leaves in November. Alas! the flower of the host had perished! The tears of Horand flowed fast when he looked in the faces of the slain, and Wat wept with him. The young squires who had jested and sung when they rode through the gate of Matalan to the wars, lay cold and stiff, and their sweethearts would kiss their lips no more. They would fain have carried their dead home with them, but there was no room in the ships; moreover they lacked the spices wherewith to embalm the bodies; so with troubled hearts they began to dig graves upon the barren shore.

The king's grave they hewed out of the living rock on a cliff that overlooked the sea; a place for his head, a place for his feet, and a great hollow stone to cover him with. They buried him in his armour. Young Ortwin laid his head in the grave, and kissed his lips, and bade him farewell.

Alas! who should bring the evil news to Hilda, and tell her that the king was slain with the flower of the people, and her daughter captive with the Norman?

They dug many graves wide and deep on the sea-shore, out of the reach of the spring-tides, and there they laid their comrades side by side.

"Shall we bury these Normans?" asked Irolt.

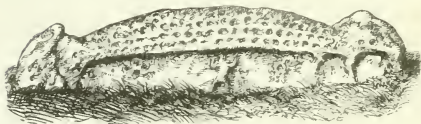
"Leave them for the wolves and ravens," said Wat of Sturmland.



“God forbid!” said the gentle Horand. “We will make three barrows—one for the Hegelings, one for the Normans, and one for Siegfried’s men.”

For five days they laboured, and on the sixth, when their task was ended, they ascended the mounds and drank love and remembrance over the graves with many a tear. This done they went to their ships with heavy hearts, and set sail for their own land. A while after there came pious men sent by Ortwin to keep the graves holy, and these built a little chapel for mariners above King Hetel’s grave, which Queen Hilda endowed with three hundred marks yearly, that they might call night and day upon the Redeemer.

God be merciful to all that sleep on the Wulpen-sand!







## CHAPTER XIV.

### *How Gudrun was brought to Cassian.*

BUT now let us hear how Ludwig and Hartmut fared on their journey home with the captive maids and the treasures they had taken from Matalan. The King and his son beheld the towers of Cassian with little joy ; for their hearts were filled with shame when they knew they must tell Gerlinta how they had stolen away in the night and left their dead unburied.

The common folk rejoiced loudly ; well pleased that they had brought their lives and booty safe from the Wulpensand, and should see wife and child again.

But the Hegeling maids wept afresh when they saw the burg of Cassian ; their hope was at an end, and they knew they must be captives in the land of the Norman. Ludwig bade Gudrun mark the towers, standing white and fair on the marge of the sea.

“Seest thou the burg yonder? Rejoice, maiden, for if thou art gracious to us thou shalt be mistress there.”

But the noble maid answered :

“How can I be gracious? Ye have shown little



grace to me. My father is slain ; my mother is far away. Sorrow is my lot here below."

Ludwig answered :

"Leave off weeping, and bestow thy love on Hartmut ; then shalt thou share all our gold, and live in honour and riches with the knight."

But the noble maid, all helpless as she was, feared him not, but answered :

"Leave me in peace ! I would die sooner than wed Hartmut ; and if God curses him with the love of me, be assured that I will yield up my life ere I will be his queen."

This bold speech angered the king beyond measure, in his fury he forgot all knightly honour and Christian pity, and seizing the maid by her golden hair he flung her into the sea. Hartmut heard her cry, and springing swiftly into the waves, caught her by her long yellow locks, and brought her back to the ship where she presently came to herself. Her companions wept when they saw the king's daughter so roughly used ; for they thought it would go hard with them in the strange land.

Hartmut chid his father.

"What mad humour is this ? Would you drown Gudrun, who is as dear to me as my own body ? Had another done it, I swear I would have struck him dead."

"Peace !" said Ludwig. "From my youth upwards I have brooked no ill word from friend or foe.



Many have paid for such with their lives ; therefore warn mistress Gudrun that she may not anger me."

Being now safe anchored in the harbour, they sent up a messenger to Queen Gerlinta bidding her come to the shore to meet the maid of the Hegelings. Gerlinta rejoiced greatly when she heard of their coming ; for she knew that Hartmut had gained his desire, and that she had been avenged for Hilda's scorn. She donned her costliest garments, made her women deck themselves in their robes of feasting, and rummaged in her coffers and chests to find precious stones, and chains, and ouches, wherewith to adorn her young daughter, the fair and gentle Ortrun. Then she bade the grooms lead out the white palfreys on which she and her women rode, and deck them with trappings of gold ; and she and all her ladies mounted and rode to the shore, a rich and noble company. When they reached the strand the sailors had already unloaded the ships, the people were rejoicing over the spoils : friend met friend with kind greeting, mothers kissed their sons, husbands their wives, but the Hegeling maids sat and wept in silence.

Hartmut seized Gudrun's white hand and led her to the queen. It was little to her liking ; but she could not wrest her hand away, and was forced to follow him and meet his mother. Young Ortrun came forward and greeted and kissed her. Gudrun kissed her again, for she saw that the maid was loving and



free from guile. Then came Gerlinta and would have kissed her likewise, but Gudrun said :

“Come not near me ! Well I know that it is through your evil counsels my father is slain, and I am captive here.”

Gerlinta only smiled, for she could dissemble well ; but her smile boded the child of the Hegelings little good.

That night Gudrun with her maids slept in tents upon the shore, the burg being filled with knights. The following day Hartmut led them to a castle which belonged to him, and where he proposed to keep Gudrun until she should be made his wife. Truly he entreated her with all honour. She had maids to do her bidding, and grooms and serving-men at her call, jewels and fair garments such as women delight in ; but she would take comfort of none of these things, bewailing day and night the death of her father and her captivity. The other maidens wept with her, and none of the Norman dames or knights could win a kind word from them, save only Ortrun, whom Gudrun loved to see and converse with. Days and weeks and months passed by ; but Gudrun grew more sorrowful, and refused steadfastly all the pleasure that Hartmut offered her, entertaining him only with silence and sad looks when he approached her ; and Gerlinta asked :

“How long will Hetel’s daughter weep and make moan ? When will she embrace King Hartmut, and call him husband ?”



Gudrun answered her :

“Could you love one who had slain your nearest friends? I wot you would find the task too hard, Gerlinta.”

“That is all past and gone,” answered the queen ; “take comfort and be submissive to Hartmut, and I will gladly yield you my crown, and all my jewels ; and will give you, moreover, my best thanks.”

She spoke truly, for she loved her son better than her own life.

“I will not wear your crown,” she answered ; “talk not to me of your riches. Would you have me wed your son for his gold? I can have no peace in this land. Night and day I long to be away from here.”

Gerlinta told this speech to Hartmut, who was sorely grieved.

“Behold how I have encompassed her with love and honour, yet she gives me not even a kind look. She knows not what love is, else she would not be so hard hearted.”

“My son,” said Gerlinta, “it takes a wise head to rule a spoiled child. Leave Gudrun to me, and I will soon teach her to be less scornful.”

“That I will gladly do,” he answered, “since my love cannot prevail with her. But treat her gently, remembering that she is a king’s daughter ; and, moreover, that she is a stranger in our land.”

So Gerlinta had Gudrun brought over to her own dwelling, and gave her a little chamber among the



serving-women. Her pages and serving-maids were taken from her, likewise the rich garments Hartmut had given her, and she received coarse garments, the like of which had never been on her fair limbs before. Then Gerlinta set herself to tame Gudrun, and there was never such hard dealing known since the world began.

"Hearken to me, mistress Gudrun," said the she-devil; "if you will not have joy you shall have sorrow. You shall work with the chamber wenches, and sweep my room, and heat the stove, each day, and fail not in the task, at your peril."

"What you bid me do, I will gladly fulfil," she answered, "until it shall please God to deliver me; but my mother's daughter was little used to such work as this."

"What care I?" answered Gerlinta; "you have a proud spirit and it must be broken. You think yourself high and mighty. I know a balsam that is good for pride. It is work; and you shall drudge with your hands as no queen ever did before-you."

Having said this, she parted Gudrun from the other maidens; and gave her daily work in the chambers and hall, night and morning. When her son asked how Gudrun fared the she-devil told him wicked lies.

"Hetel's daughter never ceases to revile thee and thy knights; and I will drive her forth from my presence ere I will suffer it longer."



Hartmut answered gently :

“Deal kindly with her, howsoever she may behave herself. I have done her wrong, therefore she hates me.”

“She is stubborn,” answered Gerlinta, “and unless she is tamed by hard treatment she will never become thy wife.”

“You counsel me ill,” said Hartmut ; “use your power over her discreetly, lest she learn to hate me yet more.”

Then he made ready with his knights and departed to the wars ; and when he was gone, the she-devil, filled with fresh wrath, went up to the poor Hegeling maidens, and said :

“Arise, and do my bidding, each working diligently, or it will go ill with you.”

Thereupon they were all separated, and each had her work appointed with the serving-wenches. Some had to spin flax ; others hackled it and wove it into linen ; and this was the lightest task that fell to their lot : for many of them were made to do the roughest housework, which was ill suited to their soft hands that in other days had been wont to weave pearls and jewels in golden tapestry. The old she-wolf was most spiteful against those who were kin to Gudrun, and the noblest of these, the duchess Hergart, she caused to carry water and firewood into Ortrun’s chambers. Yet for three years and a half these noble maids cheerfully endured the rage and scorn of their enemies,



thinking it more honourable to suffer with their dear mistress, than to share the wealth and pleasures offered to them. Truly, the duchess Hergart proved unfaithful ; for, being wearied out by Gerlinta's hard dealing, and the labour which was put upon her, she went over to the Normans and wedded the king's cup-bearer, which profited her little in the end, as ye shall hear.

After three years came Hartmut back from the wars ; being still inflamed by the love of Gudrun, and counting all his spoils and conquests as nothing since he could not win her to his mind. Straightway he sought the maid where she sat alone in her little chamber, weary with the day's labour and sad at heart.

"Gudrun, dear maid," he said, "how have you fared since I went with my men to the wars?"

"They have made me serve in sorrow and need," she answered, "and yours is the guilt."

Then Hartmut went to Gerlinta.

"What have you done, mother? I bade you entreat the maid gently that she might forget her heart's sorrow."

The she-wolf answered :

"How could I entreat Hetel's daughter gently, when, despite my behest, she would not cease railing against thee and thy kin?"

"That was in the bitterness of her heart," answered Hartmut, "because we made her fatherless, and slew her best friends. We owe her kind words and gentle usage."



His mother answered :

“Kindness will not tame her. Believe me, son, if we were to try it for thirty years she would never yield to thee. Only the whip and rod will break her stubborn will. It was always thus with Hagen’s race.”

The young King was wroth at these words of his mother, and she, perceiving that he was not to be worked round to her mind, spake him fair, and said :

“I will use her more gently in future according to thy wish.”

So Hartmut went to the wars again : and fought on sea and land for seven long years, loving Gudrun all the while, and bestowing no thought on any other woman.

Before his ship had left the harbour, Gerlinta went up to the maid, filled with fresh fury, for she counted it her fault that her beloved and only son must wander away on the seas, and said :

“Now, my fair maid, bethink yourself and bow your haughty spirit, or I have harder tasks for you than you have tried before.”

Gudrun answered :

“I will do whatever you are pleased to appoint, ere I will take another man in place of my betrothed husband.”

“Is it so, proud maid ?” answered Gerlinta ; “then, I promise you, you shall have work enough. See to it that you kindle the fires in my chambers each day, and carry water and firewood out of the court, which



was erst the task of the grooms; sweeping out the rooms moreover twice a day, and dusting the settles and chairs. And the golden hair that hangs to your knees, of which you are so proud, shall serve you for a duster, to wipe away the dust and cobwebs. I will break your proud spirit ere I have done with you!"

Gudrun answered her not a word, but set about her task, and did it daily for seven years; and though none saw her smile, she was never seen to weep; nor did she utter a word of complaint.

On the eve of the eighth year came Hartmut back from the wars, loaded with fame and riches, for he had shewn strength and valour before all other kings, and gained many battles by land and sea.

His dearest hope was now, as before, that Gudrun might bear him good will for the sake of all he had done, and consent to be crowned his queen. So he went into her presence, and found her alone and comfortless. She was meanly clad, her hands were coarse with hard labour, and her golden hair, that was wont to be so carefully braided, was dull and unkempt. The noble knight loved her no whit less for this, but besought her to love him more humbly than he had done before. His pleading was in vain; she gave him no word nor look of kindness, and he went away sorrowful of heart. Then certain of the older knights, who saw his sorrow, and perceived that the hope he had nourished and fed for seven years was but a mockery to him, counselled him that he should no



longer heed his mother, but bring the maid to his will as he best might. Thereupon he sought Gudrun's presence again, and taking her hand in his, said :

"Love me, maiden ; well you know I would not deem my treasures, my crown, and all my good knights, too great a price for one happy hour of your love."

She answered :

"How should I have a heart for love in the midst of all this woe that your mother has caused me ? when, moreover, as you know, I am a foe to you and all your kin."

"All the evil my mother has done I will make good," said Hartmut, "as you shall speedily see if you will only be kind to me."

But she denied him all the more. Then he spake :

"You know, Gudrun, that all this land is mine—the castles, the people, yea, even the sea ; who then should hang me if I should force you to my will ?"

"That were so base a deed, Hartmut, I should not fear it," she answered. "How would it be when the neighbouring princes learned it, and told it to your shame that you had made King Hetel's daughter your leman ?"

"What reck I of their tales ?" said Hartmut. "If you and I were wed we need fear none in the world."

"Trouble me no more," she answered ; "I can never return your love. You know well, Hartmut, what you did with a strong arm to me and my people ; how you took me captive at my mother's hearth, and



brought me hither ; how your knights slew my best friends, and how your father Ludwig clove my father's skull in twain on the Wulpensand. Troth, if I were a man nor he nor you should dare to come near me unarmed ! Moreover, since old time it was ever the honoured and praiseworthy custom that no woman should take a man for her husband unless she were of the same mind as he, that they might live together in love and peace and honour."

Hartmut was wroth at this answer ; for he deemed it hard that she could forgive him nothing for the sake of his love and faithfulness to her, and he answered :

"Since you thus flout me and despise my love, I will grieve no longer for ought that befalls you. The evil you have suffered is of your own seeking ; the fruit of your own deeds ; and if you will not be my queen you must abide here a captive as hitherto."

"Gladly will I abide a captive in this little cell," answered Gudrun ; "and I will earn my bread by the labour of my hands as I have done before ; and I will serve your knights and Gerlinta's dames, and endure all that shall be put upon me, and joy and pleasure shall be far from me until God remembers my need."





## CHAPTER XV.

### *How the Hegelings returned to Matalan.*

QUEEN HILDA looked out from the towers of Matalan and saw white sails on the western sea. Then she called to her people :

“ Make ready, make ready ! King Hetel is coming back from the wars with my daughter Gudrun that Hartmut stole.”

Then the serving-men and maids donned their best with glad faces, the cooks bestirred themselves in the kitchens and set the big chimneys smoking, the butler brought up his best wines, and the tables were spread in the hall with platters and stoups in readiness for the knights. All was bustle and joy among Hilda’s servants ; the men hoped for largess, the women hoped to kiss their sweethearts again ; they knew not what grief awaited both great and small.

Hilda and her women decked themselves bravely, and rode down to the water’s edge to meet the ships. Wat’s ship came into harbour first. The old earl stood at the helm, his knights around him still and motionless. The servants marvelled and said :



"Is this he that was wont to come home with blasts of trumpet and shouts of joy?"

They came down from the ship, and Hilda saw that their armour was spoiled, and their shields were hacked, and that the horses were in sorry plight.

"Where is my daughter Gudrun?" asked Hilda.

"Mistress," answered Wat, "the traitor Ludwig escaped us in the night."

"Where is thy king, thou lord of Sturm-land?" asked the queen in fear.

"Would you know, mistress? We have left him on the Wulpensand."

Then young maids asked for their sweethearts, and wives for their husbands.

"I cannot hide it," said Wat. "They are all slain on the Wulpensand with King Hetel."

When the queen heard this she lifted up her voice and wept bitterly, and all the people wept with her. After a space she asked for her son, young Ortwin.

"He will be here anon," said Wat; "he is staying behind with Frut and Horand."

Hilda began to weep afresh.

"Thou dost deceive me, Wat. Ortwin is slain."

"No, by my troth, he is well and sound, and will be here in an hour."

Then she asked for Herwig.

"Herwig is gone to seek the good pilgrims, that he may repair the harm we did them. When we got the ill news from Matalan, I took by force ten ships



which belonged to defenceless pilgrims coming from the Holy Shrine. God has recompensed us for the evil deed. And now I have sent Herwig to seek the pilgrims, and give them back the ships ; and what we took from them shall be repaid tenfold."

"Thou hast done well," said Hilda, "and, moreover, I will send to each of the holy men three silver marks, that they may bless us and not curse us."

After a while came Herwig, for he had found the pilgrims without trouble, had restored their ships, and sent them rejoicing on their way. With him came Ortwin, and both the noble princes were melted to tears at the sight of Hilda's grief which now broke out afresh. They all wept and lamented together, until the Earl of Sturm-land, who loved not the sight of weeping, began to reprove them.

"Tears will not bring the dead back again," he said ; "let us consider how we may bring Gudrun home, and punish Ludwig for his deed."

"I am no laggard," said Herwig, "and the queen knows that I have yet a thousand good knights who will serve her to the death. Let us depart for Normandy before to-morrow's sun has set, for I shall know no peace nor rest till I have brought my dear bride Gudrun back to her mother."

Said Wat :

"I will gather together all the fighting men in the land. The people will help you with their treasure to the last groat. Ortwin will raise the men of Nortland ;



Irolt and Horand will bring all who can bear arms in Daneland; in twelve days we shall know of a surety how many we can muster to pursue the Norman."

"Wat has spoken well," said Frut, "we shall need every man in the kingdom; for the Norman has a mighty host, all tried and proven warriors, who will give our swords tough work. Let us, therefore, take leave of the queen, and depart with all speed for our lands, that we may see what men we can raise." So they all rode away; and after twelve days they appeared again at Matalan. Ortwin and Hilda met them in the great hall; and each knight counted up what he could bring in men, arms, and treasures. Arms were in plenty, and gold was not wanting, but the men were few; for every house in the land counted its dead. After they had pondered awhile Wat spake:

"It is plain that we cannot raise a host to follow the Normans. We must wait patiently. In five years the lads of to-day will be bearded men. They will remember how their fathers died on the Wulpensand, and will take grim vengeance for their death. The queen will see that they will fight like heroes."

"Is this thy counsel, Wat," asked Hilda, "must my daughter sit captive five years among the Normans?"

Herwig was wroth.

"I did not think, Wat, that age would leave its mark on thee. In days of yore thou wert little wont to counsel such sluggish delay."



"Peace," said Horand ; "quiet was ever a bed of thorns to the Earl of Sturmland. Young lovers are rash counsellors."

"I am of Wat's mind," said Frut. "If we go against the Normans now, we shall surely fail, and give the false Ludwig new cause for joy."

Herwig and Hilda were fain to yield to the counsels of the old knights, though sorely against their will ; and the enterprise was put off for five years. Then the knights took leave of the queen, each promising to be ready when the appointed day should draw near, and she bade them farewell with loving speeches, thanking them for all they willed to do for her sake. The last to leave were Herwig and Wat. The King of Zealand had a sorrowful heart, for he knew that long months and years must pass over his head before he could hope to see the fair Gudrun again.

Wat gave wise counsel in parting.

"Mistress," he said, "our help lies in the great pine forests of Westerwald. Let the tallest trees be hewn down, and build us great ships, that we may lack nothing for our adventure."

"It shall be done," she answered ; "and, moreover, I will build twenty keels here by the sea-shore, which will bear you to the Normans' land in safety. Fair fall him who remembers me and my sorrow, and does aught for the sake of my dear daughter Gudrun ! Let me see you oft in my widowhood, for the days will be long and weary until I kiss Gudrun again."



Then they all rode away, some east, some west, and the queen was left alone. She did not fail to remember the holy men who watched by Hetel's grave, and sent to them food and money, and built upon the shore a cloister, which in after time was known far and near as the abbey on the Wulpensand.







## CHAPTER XVI.

### *How Gudrun was made to wash for the Normans.*

HARTMUT went out from Gudrun's presence filled with wrath ; but in a little while his anger cooled down, and he sought Gerlinta that he might take counsel with her how he should bend the maid to his will.

Gerlinta, who had marked Gudrun's kindness for Ortrun, soon devised a cunning scheme by which she thought to win the maid from her stedfast purpose. Next day there was a great stir among the Norman women ; Gudrun was fetched from her mean little chamber and led into Ortrun's dwelling. A bath was prepared for her ; and when she had bathed, waiting maids came with robes of samite, and jewels, and fair white veils, that she might deck herself. After them came pages and chamberlains with delicate meats and rich wines, and begged her to eat, but she thrust them aside, saying :

“Why do ye mock me ? I will not be queen.”

Presently there entered Ortrun, Hartmut's gentle sister, who, saluting her with many kind words, told her it was her brother's will she should leave her narrow



chamber and dwell with her. Thereupon she followed Ortrun's chamberlain to the rooms where the maiden dwelt; for she bore Hartmut's sister such love that she could not refuse her prayer. And now Gudrun, who had been a poor serving-maid, was clad and feasted as the first of the land.

Two maids prepared her bath and braided her long golden hair; she wore silk and furs and jewels, and fared delicately at Ortrun's table. The colour began to come back to her cheek and the light to her eyes; and Ortrun with gentle and tender words strove to make her forget her grief and her weary captivity. After a while she likewise began to urge Hartmut's suit.

"Thou knowest how I love thee," she said, "and that I would gladly abide with thee for ever. Wed my brother, that thou mayest dwell with us in honour and friendship all thy life."

And thus did she entreat the maid daily and hourly, for she bore Hartmut great love, and desired before all things to see him happy with Gudrun.

"Why shouldst thou bear him hate?" she said. "He is brave and fair and noble; and his love deserves better from thee."

"God reward thee, Ortrun," answered she, "for all thy goodness to me; but know of a surety that I can never wed thy brother. Thou canst not know wherefore I have willingly endured all this shame and hardship, for thou hast loved no man, being yet a free



maid. I was pledged to King Herwig of Zealand to be his wife, and gave him my troth and the kiss of love ; wherefore I am his alone until death set us free. And were he dead I could not wed thy brother, for I am not of that manner of women who could love two men."

Thus she answered ever ; and when Hartmut came again into her presence, and besought her with courteous and gentle words, she answered him hardly, mindful of her griefs and wrongs. The young king was wroth at her steadfastness, and spake in foul scorn of her betrothed.

"See how the peasant king has left you in captivity these ten years ! Trust me, he has forgotten you, and consoles himself with another. Does it not move your heart when you see how I grieve at your disdain ? Do you count it nothing that I have striven to win your love for ten long years, and have looked on no other maid on earth than you ? Know of a surety you can never be released from here, for I have sworn that nothing but death shall part us. Perchance King Herwig is dead ; and it is plain that your own folk have forgotten you."

"If Herwig be dead," she spake, "and I must sit here till my hair grows white with age, I will never be your queen. Leave me in peace."

So Hartmut left her, in sorrowful mood ; and called together his knights and sailed away to the south, hoping he might forget her unkindness amid the



perils and adventures of the seas. When he was gone Gerlinta bade Gudrun leave Ortrun's chamber, and strip off her rich garments and clothe herself in coarse woollen clothes such as the serving-maids wore.

"Since thou hast scorned my son, and driven him away with thy hard words, I promise thee thou shalt have small pleasure of thy life. Down to the cold sea-beach thou shalt go, in heat and cold, in summer and winter, and cleanse the linen for my knights and dames, nor rest from daybreak to sundown."

Gudrun answered meekly :

"I will do your bidding, but I beseech you bid one of the washerwomen to shew me my task, how I shall bend my body to the work. I would fain do it well, that I may earn my bread, and have to thank the Normans for nought."

So one of the washing-maids went down with her and taught her ; and Gudrun worked well and willingly from morning until night. The Hegeling maids all wept when they saw their mistress washing at the cold sea-shore, and her cousin Hiltburga cried in Gerlinta's hearing :

"Before God this is a sin and a shame that a queen must wash, she who lived in such honour in her own land, and had the mighty Hagen of Ireland to grandsire !"

"Is it such a shame?" screamed Gerlinta ; "then thou shalt go down, proud hussy, and wash with her."



“Right willingly,” answered Hiltburga, “I shall count it great honour to work at her side, and will help her faithfully all day long.”

“Wait till the winter days come, thou saucy one, when thy fingers will turn blue with cold and freeze fast in the ice. Thou wilt seek to nestle by the stove in the women’s chamber, but to the beach thou must go, through rain, and snow, and mist. I will tame both thee and thy mistress, an ye were ten times prouder and more stubborn than ye are.”

Hiltburga heeded not her threats, but ran swiftly down to the shore and threw her arms round Gudrun and kissed her, saying :

“My heart has been sad for thee since many days, and now I have provoked the old she-wolf, until she has sent me to share thy task for punishment. I could not bear to see thee standing here alone the long day through.”

“Now Christ reward thee,” said Gudrun, “for the love thou hast shewn me, poor forsaken maid.”

And she kissed her.

“Let us work well and diligently, it will make the weary time pass more swiftly.”

So the two noble maids worked daily down at the beach, and performed their task so well that Gerlinta could find nought to blame, though she heaped heavier labours upon them, thinking to make them rue. All her spite could not make them weep nor



murmur: they did their work silently, and ate their coarse bread at night without complaint; and thus three years passed away, and none came to deliver them.







## CHAPTER XVII.

### *How the Hegelings went forth to deliver Gudrun.*

FOR thirteen years Queen Hilda had sat sorrowing in Matalan, vainly hoping that each spring would enable her to send deliverance to her captive daughter, but each year her hope had ended in sorrow.

Sad troubles had come upon the land ; plague and famine had made her poor in men and treasures, and enemies from the north country had fallen upon the coasts, ravaging the harvest fields, and carrying away the stout ships which she had built to fetch Gudrun back. Moreover Wat and Horand had been unable to help her, having been harassed in their lands from year to year by fierce sea-rovers, whom at last they had been forced to pursue to their strongholds and burn up. Siegfried of Moorland had been with his men in the east, where he had taken upon himself the quarrel of a certain Margrave, which gave him work for many years. Herwig of Zealand had suffered from evil neighbours on the borders ; he had been forced to make war upon them, and had lost many good knights in the fray. Thereafter came the black



plague and swept through the land spreading death and mourning; the next year the harvest failed, and he had hard work to succour and pacify the hungry people.

Thus thirteen years had passed, and Gudrun was still a captive; but when the new year came round again Siegfried of Moorland sent word to Hilda that he was ready to encounter the Normans, and would bring a great host to the Wulpensand. Herwig likewise sent messengers saying that he was ready, and would be at Matalan in the early days of February with four thousand chosen men. The Christmas feast was not over when Hilda got the joyful news; she tarried not an hour, but sent out swift riders to raise the folk all over the land. They called the knights from Alzabie and Nortland, from Danemark and Westerwald, from Givers and Sturmland, bidding them prepare armour and men and steeds, and gather to the host of Hilda before the walls of Matalan in eight weeks from that day. They knocked at every peasant's door in hill and dale, in wood and moorland, saying:

“Arise, the day is near when ye shall avenge your fathers who died on the Wulpensand!”

Then the young men arose, full of fire and courage, and strung their bows, and sharpened their axes and swords, and counted the weeks right wearily until February came, when they turned their faces towards Matalan, with glad hearts and fearless souls. Mothers, wives, and sweethearts followed them on the way;



but none bade them tarry, for they all rejoiced that the time had come when their fathers should be avenged, and Gudrun brought back to her own land. The first who rode to Matalan was Wat of Sturmland. Hilda's message reached him when he had been an hour abed; but straightway he rose and armed himself, and called his knights together with his horn, bidding them make ready to start at daybreak. In vain did the women beseech him to take rest, minding him that he had slain three boars that day, and had gone to bed weary.

"Tut!" he answered, "I am weary in sooth, but it is with long waiting. Thirteen years ago we measured the Norman oak, and laid our axe to the root, yet feared to strike the blow because our arm was not strong enough. I shall sleep no more under roof-tree until my axe has brought King Ludwig to the dust."

So he rode out by starlight on the winter's morning, followed by his trusty knights, and met Hilda at Matalan, where he helped her to marshal the hosts, and prepare all things which were needed for their departure in the spring. When the messengers left him they rode on to Nortland to greet King Ortwin. They found him hawking with a joyous company of knights and dames, beside a broad river where herons built. When he heard Queen Hilda's message he quickly left the sport, and bade the knights who were with him ride through all the ban, and rouse the people; moreover he sent gentle messages in reply.

"Tell my mother," he said, "that though we have



been long parted I have never forgotten her woes and wrongs ; and that before another moon is over she shall see me at her gate with three thousand spears."

From Nortland they journeyed to Zealand, and found Herwig ready in his castle of Sevan. He told them that three thousand chosen knights waited his call, and shewed them in the harbour three ships and seven galleys which he had built for the deliverance of his beloved bride. Then they rode into Danemark and roused Irolt and Morung, and came to Horand's burg, where he abode a lonely man, for he liked not the hunt nor the feast, but loved to look on the stars while his knights sat drinking in the hall. He received the messengers with great joy, and bade them greet the queen, his dear cousin, and tell her he should be at Matalan within six weeks, with four thousand good swords. When they had seen him, they rode on to Holstein, and told the good news to Frut. The men of Holstein rose as one man at his bidding, and, leaving their fields and kine to the women and lads, gathered round the old hero's banner and marched forward to Matalan. February drew nigh, and the warriors came in great hosts from east and west, from land and sea, until the plain round Matalan was as thick set with spears and banners as a harvest field with ears of corn. The fleet of ships was ready in the harbour ; their masts were the tallest firs of the Westerwald, their sails were white as snow ; the anchors were of bell-metal, bound with Spanish brass,



that they might not be drawn to the magnet rock. All day the folk were busy loading the boats with corn and barley which they had stored up from the overflow of bygone summers. When the provisions were aboard they brought great store of cuirasses and morions that the queen's armourers had prepared, and war-horses of renowned blood, the gift of King Ortwin. Many days passed before the hosts could embark, and it was already March when they left the shore. All being in readiness, Hilda went down to the water's edge with the Earl of Sturmland, and saw the warriors go on board. The chiefs came to give her their last greetings, and she answered them with kindly words.

"I thank you from my heart," she said, "for the great love you have shewn me and mine; and I beseech you to shield my dear son Ortwin with your lives, lest the Normans, who have taken from me my husband and daughter, should likewise despoil me of my son.

The chiefs promised to guard him as they would their own lives; and she thanked them again, and said:

"In the day of danger look to my gray-haired standard-bearer and you will not falter."

They asked who should bear her standard.

"Horand," she answered, "our next of kin on Hetel's side, the tried friend of former times, he who won me to be Hetel's wife."

This choice pleased them all; and having bade



Hilda farewell with words of love and comfort, they ascended the ships. The anchors were raised, the sails swelled out, the tackling creaked, and they soon lost sight of Matalan. The women looked after them with tears, the graybeards were of sorrowful mien, but the young knights laughed and sang and talked of honour and spoils they would win, not thinking that death lay in wait for them. The east wind took them swiftly on their way, and before many days had passed they reached the Wulpensand, and beheld Siegfried and his host encamped near the shore. The warriors all descended from their ships that they might view the graves of their dead. The grass was growing green above them, the chapel stood fair and white upon the strand, the bell was tinkling for prayers. The good priests read and prayed on the spot where King Hetel and his brave knights lay deaf to the call of the trumpet; and their children kneeling over their heads bewailed their loss with bitter tears. When they had heard the priests sing, they gathered around the great barrow under which the Hegelings lay buried, and Horand stood in the midst and spake :

“For thirteen years the shadow on the dial has stood still for us. Now time marches on again, and we begin to reckon days and years. This is the first day after the fight of the Wulpensand, and we hasten to avenge on the Normans the blow that laid our king in death.”

Having spoken thus he bade them go to their ships,



and they went down from the hill and put out to sea with fresh strength and courage.

For three days they sailed on cheerily ; the young knights beguiled the time with pleasant discourse, the old warriors took counsel together and spake of past dangers. One cool March night they lay suddenly becalmed near the shore. The stars were shining brightly and they all came upon the deck and talked and sang together, and the young knights grew loud and merry. Frut, who watched the helm, chid them for their exceeding mirthfulness, saying they would rouse the sea-maidens who dwelt in the caverns thereabout.

“Many brave and noble knights have they drowned upon this coast,” said he. “Horand knows their wiles. He heard them singing here one summer night thirty years ago ; his comrades, who could not withstand the witchery, sprang in the waves and perished ; but Horand’s armour-bearer, old Gibich, who was well-nigh deaf, held him fast in his arms, and thus he escaped. It was from those wild sea-maidens he learned the song that witched Hagen’s daughter.”

When Ortwin heard this he entreated Horand to sing, and besought him again and again to suffer them to hear the Lay of Amilee. Frut bade him hold his peace.

“Horand will not sing,” he said ; “his voice has been dumb since the night in which his beloved died. I have heard how he sang all the night through of his



sorrow ; how the nightingales that heard would sing no more, and the brook at Givers stopped running, and the miller churl swore, because the race was dry and the wheels stood still. But since that day Horand's voice has been dumb, and it will not wake at thy bidding."

Nevertheless Ortwin ceased not to entreat him.

"Men have told me of your golden youth, when the strains of love or sorrow that flowed from your lips touched every heart ; how you beguiled my mother with your sweet voice, and made my grandsire Wild Hagen as gentle as a little child. Was it not Horand, too, that King Hadubrand flung into the dragon's tower, because he had ensnared with his songs the heart of his golden-haired niece Gunhilda ? And the savage king came and hearkened at the gate, hungering for his death-cry, and heard his voice loud and clear in the stillness of the night. Then he turned to his niece, and said : 'Did Horand sing thus to thee ? Little marvel then that he won thy heart !' And he opened the door, and bade thee come forth, and gave thee gold and gems, and the fair Gunhilda to boot."

"Peace," said Horand ; "let the memories of those past days sleep. My joys and sorrows are buried with the flowers of forgotten springs. They have run their course like the little restless brooks that hasten down from the mountains to the sea ; but they would rise and live again and o'ermaster me,



if I touched the harp-strings I loved in the days of yore."

"In future days," said Ortwin, "I shall tell my children that I stood with Horand in the fight; but when they ask me if I heard his wondrous songs, I must answer no."

"I will sing once more," said Horand "and thou shalt be there. The night is cold, the frost stiffens my fingers, and hangs in rime on my beard, and we are drawing near the land of our foes, where the clash of swords must be our music. But when the fight is fought and the battle won, and we have avenged King Hetel, and carried Gudrun home to her mother, then will I harp for you in the great hall at the high festival, and sing the Lay of Amilee, as I sung it in the days of my youth. Now call Wat to the helm, for a wind is springing in the east, and we draw nigh Givers, where the coast is grim and treacherous."

Even while he was speaking a gale arose, and buffeted the vessel about fearfully, so that for many hours they were in peril of their lives, and doubted if they would ever reach Normandy. The storm raged for two days, and when it abated they found that they had been driven far out of their course, and must go back upon the road they had come. The wind now blowing gently for Normandy, helped them on their way swiftly, and in a few hours they saw the shores where they would land. A little harbour lay in sight enfolded by low hills clothed with dark fir-trees. They



ran their ships quietly in, and disembarked to refresh themselves and prepare for the encounter. Irolt ran up a height near at hand and climbed a lofty tree, from the top of which he could see the open country for many leagues. The hills about them were desolate, and covered by thick pine-woods ; but on the west a fruitful plain opened, in the midst of which, about a mile from the sea, stood a great palace with seven lofty towers.

When the knights heard what Irolt had seen, they knew by the seven towers that this must be Ludwig's burg, and took counsel what they should do. Wat bade them first bring the horses ashore, which had grown stiff for want of exercise, and when they had fed and rubbed them, and led them up and down the strand, they lit watch-fires, and sat down to eat beside them.

"It is plain to me," said Frut, "that we should first send spies, who might learn whether Gudrun be yet alive, and in what part of the land of Normandy she dwells."

The others approved this counsel, and they then debated whom they should send. When the older knights had spoken their mind, Ortwin said :

"Of all the Hegelings, who is so meet for the errand as I, who am Gudrun's brother?"

"And who is so meet to bear thee company," said King Herwig, "as I, who am her betrothed husband? Let us therefore set out to-night ; we may guide our-



selves through the pine-woods by the signs of the stars." But Wat chid them.

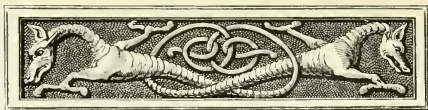
"It is fool-hardiness," he said, "that two chosen knights like you should risk your lives as messengers. If Hartmut finds you he will hang you for spies."

Frut likewise strove to dissuade them, but they would not hearken to his counsel. Calling their men together, they said to them :

"If we return no more, but perish by Ludwig's hand, see that ye avenge us with the vengeance of the sword in all his lands. Moreover, ye shall not leave the poor maids in captivity, but shall deliver them, according to the oath ye swore at Matalan." Their warriors swore this, and the chief knights likewise swore upon the hands of the two princes that they would not return to their own land until they had freed Gudrun, and avenged King Hetel's death.

The sea being very calm, the twain, by Frut's counsel, then set out in a little boat, and were soon lost to the eyes of their friends. Those whom they left behind, having set up their tents, lay down to rest, and slept soundly until the first beams of the sun shot from behind the Hill of Gustarde.





## CHAPTER XVIII.

### *How the Messengers came to Gudrun.*

LET us leave the good knights upon the sea, and hear how Gudrun and Hiltburga fared with their washing.

Hartmut had been away all the winter, and Gerlinta, who grieved for her son, had grown so hard and bitter with the poor maids, that their lives became a burden to them. All through the frosty winter's day they were forced to stand washing at the shore, their hands and feet benumbed with cold; and when they went back to the burg, they got for supper coarse rye-bread with spring water, and had to sleep upon hard wooden benches. Their clothes, which were of coarse woollen, were almost worn out; and the old she-wolf would not give them new; for it was her purpose, by hunger and cold and hardship, to break Gudrun's heart, if she could not break her will.

Oft times she plagued her with bitter taunts, reviling her kin, most of all Queen Hilda, and telling her that Herwig was dead, or that he had taken another bride. She would fain have seen Gudrun weep or have heard her complain; but the noble maid bore all



this, likewise the insults and gibes of many of the Norman dames, without a murmur or a tear; nor would she in her greatest need ask any boon of the cruel Gerlinta, which vexed the she-wolf more and more.

But Hiltburga had sometimes sought to prevail with her, asking for Gudrun what she would not have asked for herself; and thus it came to pass that on the cold March day when Ortwin and Herwig set forth to seek tidings of the lost ones, she went into Gerlinta's chamber to beseech her that they might stay in-doors. The she-wolf was still asleep; but when she awoke and saw it light in the room, she began to revile them.

"How is it ye are not down at the beach hard at work? Easter is nigh, and I must have store of fair white garments for all my people. Forth with you at once, or it will be worse for you ere the day is over!"

"Mistress," answered Hiltburga, "we were almost frozen to death yester eve. Suffer us to do our task in-doors, or you will find us stiff and cold before night."

Gerlinta laughed a wicked laugh at this.

"Ha, proud one, I see thou dost rue thy bargain. Since that thou hast humbled thyself thus I will let thee stay in the burg, but Gudrun shall wash on the beach."

"I would not suffer her to go alone," answered



Hiltburga, "and if I knew I must die this day. But give us shoes at least, to save our feet from the bitter frost. Those which you gave us were long since worn out ; and we shall be frozen to death if we go bare-foot in this snow."

"What is your death to me?" screamed Gerlinta, furiously. "Hence to the shore, and do my washing while ye have life in you ; or I will mark you black and blue !"

So they went out, and taking the clothes on their arms, walked in silence to the beach. There they worked till noonday : the pitiless wind which blew off the sea caused their wet garments to freeze to their limbs, and benumbed their hands until they could scarcely beat the clothes. Their misery was extreme, and the poor maid Gudrun was nigh perishing. Her hope was dead, her heart failed her, and she would assuredly have died there but for a great marvel which I will presently unfold. She had laid down her work, being unable to fulfil her task, and looked over to the east, where her own country lay. The heaven was black with brooding storms, the sea was black beneath ; but there was one white speck among the waves, which, presently growing larger, shewed itself to be a white bird of a kind that was unknown to her.

"Beautiful bird," said Gudrun ; "how I pity thee that thou must live among these icy waters. If I had wings like thee I would flee far from this pitiless land."



Now whether this were an angel sent in the shape of a bird to console the forsaken maid, I know not ; but this is true that the creature answered her in a human voice, saying :

“I have come to thee to bring thee news of thy own land, noble maid ; ask what thou dost desire to know.”

When Gudrun heard this she fell upon her knees on the beach, and blessed the merciful Christ, who had had pity upon her when she was nigh unto death ; then she asked of the bird :

“Lives Hilda yet, she who was Gudrun’s mother ?”

“She lives,” spake the bird ; “and has not ceased to weep for thee day and night.”

“And my brother Ortwin,” said Gudrun, “and my betrothed husband, King Herwig, how have they fared since I left Matalan ?”

“It is well with them,” answered the messenger ; “I saw them but a little while since in a boat upon the sea.”

“And old Wat, the Earl of Sturmland, does he yet live, and has he remembered me ?”

“I saw Wat of Sturmland, and with him were Irolt and the graybeard Frut. He was on a great ship, and stood with the rudder in his hand steering straight for Normandy. But now I must forth, for I have errands elsewhere.”

Gudrun was overcome with joy at these glad tidings.



"Stay yet a little while I beseech thee," she said, "and tell me of Horand the singer. I loved him well."

"Horand is hale and strong," answered the bird; "I saw him bearing Queen Hilda's banner, and leading a mighty host. God keep thee, fair maid! I can tarry here no longer; but to-morrow thou shalt see two messengers who will bring thee tidings of thy deliverance."

Then the bird spread out its great white wings and vanished swiftly from their sight. For a while the two maids were bewildered at the good news: when they had recovered from their astonishment they began to talk of the things they had heard, and marvelled when their friends would appear. Meanwhile the washing lay unheeded; and when even fell upon them they were forced to return to the burg with half their work undone. Gerlinta would certainly have beaten them, but Hartmut had come back, and she was in a gentler mood. Nevertheless, she railed at them angrily, asking wherefore they had not fulfilled their task. Hiltburga excused herself.

"We have done what we could. It froze bitterly, and our hands grew stiff. We shall do better when warm weather comes."

"What is the weather to me?" answered the she-wolf. "Ye do your work, fair weather and foul; or blows shall be your portion. The high festival draws near. See to it that there are pure white robes ready



for all my knights to wear on Palm Sunday, or ye shall pay for it in stripes and shame."

They went from her presence, and having put aside their wet garments, ate their supper, and lay down upon their hard beds. But they could not sleep all night for joy at the thought of seeing their countrymen ; and at the first gleam of day they arose and prepared to go to the shore. The garments which they had laid aside the night before were frozen stiff, for Gerlinta would not suffer them to have a stove in their chamber ; and having no other clothes they were compelled to go to the beach clad only in their long shifts of linen.

The wind still blew sharp, and the frozen ground hurt their naked feet ; but they scarcely heeded these things, in their joy at the tidings which had been brought to them by the bird.

They washed until noon, watching the sea with wistful eyes, for they knew that the messengers should come from thence.





## CHAPTER XIX.

*How Herwig found Gudrun washing on the shore.*

A LITTLE after mid-day Gudrun saw a white sail among the waves. It drew near to them, and presently they perceived that it was a little skiff, and that two men sat in it.

“Woe is me!” said Gudrun; “my very joy brings me new sorrow. I should shame if Queen Hilda’s messengers found me washing at the shore. Shall I flee or await their coming?”

“Nay, I cannot give thee counsel,” said Hiltburga. “Do as it seems fit unto thee. I will abide with thee in good or ill.”

While they debated the matter the boat came closer, and Gudrun threw down the linen and ran away, followed by Hiltburga. The two knights had already perceived them, and springing ashore they pursued them over the sands, calling out:

“Whither away, fair maids? Give us speech, or we will keep these garments which ye have left behind in pledge.”



They gave no heed to these words, but ran on ; and Herwig cried :

“Tarry a while, dear maidens, and give us speech. We entreat it of you by the honour and gentleness of all maids ; for we are strangers here, and have need of your good services.”

When the sorrowful Gudrun heard these courteous words, so strange to her in her wretchedness, she could not refrain from weeping, and stood still until the knights came up. It was about that time of the year when departing winter sheds his last terrors upon the earth : a sharp breeze was blowing, and the sea was covered with broken-up ice ; but there were gleams of sunshine upon the hills, and the little birds began to tune their throats tremulously that they might be ready to sing their lay when the March weather was past. Gudrun trembled with cold : her wet garment clung close to her white limbs : the wind dashed her golden hair about her face ; yet she was so lovely in her desolation that the knights gazed upon her with wonder.

“I will give you speech,” she said, “since ye entreat me by the honour of maidens. Such words have been strange to my ears ; therefore do I weep.”

“I marvel greatly,” said Ortwin, “who the mistress may be that has such stately maids to do her washing. Ye ought to wear a crown, and reign over wide lands. Has your mistress many such washers as ye ?”

“She has many who are fairer than we seem to



you," answered Gudrun. "But ask quickly what ye seek to know, for the mistress will be wroth if she sees us from the tower."

"Do not take it ill, fair maids, that we offer you these four pieces of gold. They are your guerdon for the news ye shall tell us."

"Keep your gold pieces," said Gudrun. "We can take nothing at your hand. Ask quickly what ye would know, or ye will bring trouble on us."

"Tell us, then, whose are this noble castle and these rich lands. Who is the master that makes you wash here unclothed in this bitter weather? He reckes little of his own honour methinks; or he would not use you thus."

"He whom we serve is called Ludwig of Normandy," answered Gudrun. "Hartmut is his son. They dwell here in wealth and power, and are served by many knights."

"We would gladly see them," said Ortwin; "where can we find them?"

"I left Ludwig in the burg this morning with fourteen hundred knights. I know not if they have ridden thence since we came forth."

"Does Ludwig live in fear of his life that he keeps so many men about him?" asked Herwig. "With such a host I could win a kingdom if I took the field."

"He is no coward," answered Gudrun; "but he fears distant foes in the Hegelings' land."

The maidens trembled with cold while they stood



parleying with the young men ; and the King of Zealand offered them his cloak, with courteous excuses. But Gudrun refused it, saying :

“ I am not wont to have men’s garments about me.”

When she spoke thus Herwig looked more closely at her, and perceived that she bore some likeness to his dear bride, from whom he had been parted for long years ; and he even thought that this poor washing maid, with her hair smoothly braided, and in silken garments, might pass for a sister of his noble Gudrun.”

“ Have you heard of a foray which King Ludwig made in the land of the Hegelings, whence he returned with great treasure and many captive maidens ?”

“ Well have I heard of it,” answered Gudrun. “ I saw the captives land here. Their faces were white with sorrow, and they wept many bitter tears in yonder burg.”

“ Know you if the maid Gudrun, King Hetel’s daughter, was among these captives ?” asked Herwig.

“ I have heard of such a one,” answered she. “ Nay, I have seen her many times ; and oft in hardship and sorrow.”

While she spake thus of herself her heart was troubled ; and Herwig, turning to Ortwin, said :

“ Never saw I maid in the world who bore such likeness to thy sister. Almost could I believe that this poor maid were Gudrun herself.”



"She is fair in sooth," spake Ortwin ; "but not to compare with my sister. Gudrun was noble and stately, with arms and throat whiter than the feathers of the swan."

Gudrun heard the words which Herwig spake, and looking at her brother, knew him, despite his beard, which had grown long and thick since they had parted thirteen years before. Then lifting her eyes to the face of Herwig, in which she had not dared to gaze in her shame and trouble, she saw that it was her betrothed husband, for whose sake she had borne all the woes of her captivity. When she could speak she said to him :

"You, too, mind me of one whom I knew in past days, Herwig, lord of Zealand. If he were here he would know me, for I am one of those who were brought from Matalan. You seek Gudrun in vain. She drank her cup of sorrow and died long ago."

When the knights heard this they began to weep ; and Gudrun said :

"Ye, who thus bewail the maid, are doubtless of her kin."

Herwig answered :

"Woe, woe to my latest day ! She was my betrothed wife, sworn to me with solemn vows, and plighted with a ring of gold ; and now I shall see her no more."

"You would not deceive me, poor forsaken one,"



said Gudrun. "They told me Herwig of Zealand had died in the wars."

"Look at my hand, and say if you know this gold upon it," answered Herwig. "With this ring I was betrothed to Gudrun."

When Gudrun looked she saw a precious stone from Abalie, set in red gold, which she had once worn upon her hand. She laughed for joy, and said :

"Surely I know that ring, for I wore it once upon my own hand. And now behold this, which my beloved placed upon my finger while I yet lived in happiness at Matalan."

And Herwig looked, and saw the ring he had given her on the day of their betrothal. Then he cried :

"Thou art in truth Gudrun!" and clasping her in his arms, kissed her upon her cheek and mouth. Ortwin likewise kissed his sister, and greeted the faithful Hiltburga, whom Gudrun made known to them; and when they had rejoiced together a while, he began to ask how they came to be on the cold sea-shore, and in such sorry plight.

"Tell me, sister," he said, "are the Norman dames wont to wash their silks and linens with their own hands? It is passing strange to me that a queen should be forced to do such labour."

"Thou knowest that I am no queen here," she answered. "What I do I have done willingly, that I might not take my daily bread from the hands of our foes for nought."



"What dost thou here alone? Where are the children thou hast borne to Hartmut?"

She answered him :

"I have no children. All the people in the land know that King Hartmut desired such of me ; but I have stedfastly denied him, and therefore they have made me serve them as a bond-woman."

Ortwin grew wroth when he heard this; vowing that every man and woman in Cassian should pay with their lives for the wrong that had been done to his sister ; but Herwig bade him hold his peace, and help him to bring the women swiftly into the boat, that they might reach the host before nightfall.

"Not so," said Ortwin. "If I had a hundred sisters they should perish ere I would steal them from mine enemies' gate. She was taken in storm, and I will fetch her back in storm and fire."

"But how if the Normans learn that we have been here, and carry them away to some secret place? It might be that we should never behold them more."

"If we carry off Gudrun to-night," answered Ortwin, "what will become of the other noble maids who are likewise of our kin and country? There are sixty of them who have been captives with my sister."

"I will not leave my betrothed bride here," said Herwig, "come what may."

"I will be hewn to pieces," said Ortwin, "before I will take away these women secretly."

Gudrun wept at these words of her brother.



“Methinks, Ortwin, thou dost bear me little love,” said she. “Is this my reward for having waited these weary years?”

“Dear sister, I love thee, as thou well knowest; but mine honour still more. Trust me I will lead thee hence in safety, and bring thee back to thy mother Queen Hilda, in Matalan.”

So saying, he went back to the boat; and Herwig, perceiving he could not prevail with him, kissed his betrothed, and besought her to dwell in Cassian a little while longer. But Gudrun could not restrain her tears when she saw that they must be left behind.

“Woe is me,” she cried. “Ye leave me here among my foes, not knowing what ill may befall me in the night. Much I fear I shall never see my father’s land again.”

“Have patience until morning, dear heart,” said Herwig, “and with daylight thou shalt see me before Cassian with twenty thousand men.”

Whereupon he set sail; and the little boat with the two knights was soon lost in the distance. Gudrun gazed wistfully after it, her heart full of mingled joy and sorrow, but the careful Hiltburga aroused her from her dreams.

“Here is this great heap of linen,” she said, “and it must all be cleansed before sundown. We must begin in good earnest, or Gerlinta will beat us when we go back.”

“I shall wash no more clothes for Gerlinta,”



answered Gudrun. "Two kings have kissed me, and embraced me to boot. God forbid that I should do her further service !"

Hiltburga began to wash, while Gudrun looked on with idle hands.

"Dear cousin," said Hiltburga after a space, "I beseech thee do thy portion. Bethink thee of Gerlinta's fury when she sees thy task undone."

"What care I for her fury?" answered Gudrun. "Let her do her worst ; she will pay dearly for it on the morrow."

Then she took the veils and robes one by one, and flung them into the water, smiling when the tide carried them out to sea. Hiltburga lamented and chid, and tried to save the garments ; but they floated merrily out, and never came back again.

Gudrun watched the last piece disappear ; and when it was out of sight she said :

"Now, let us depart."

"I dare not go back," replied her companion. "Gerlinta will murder us, for the missing veils."

"I fear her not," answered Gudrun. "Love and bliss have drawn near me again : I feel myself a queen once more."

Then she walked towards the gate ; and Hiltburga followed, with three veils and seven robes saved from the wreck. Gerlinta was waiting at the portal, ready to salute them with evil words.

"What are ye doing so late on the shore ? The



vespers tolled an hour ago ; and all the stars are out in the sky ?”

Gudrun made no answer, and the old she-wolf went on :

“Thou canst not speak for shame. Herlinda saw thee from the tower wantoning with two churls on the beach. Thou couldst kiss and embrace them forsooth, thou who didst despise King Hartmut’s love ?”

“Why do you revile me ?” answered Gudrun. “I never kissed any man, save those of my own kin, whom I could kiss in honour.”

“Peace, thou ill hussy ! Dost thou give me the lie ? But I will make thee pay dearly for thy frowardness. Thou shalt be beaten till thou art black and blue. I will teach thee to shew thy queen more honour.”

“Have a care,” answered Gudrun. “Remember that I am of king’s blood, and better than your own. Rods and straps are not for me.”

Gerlinta was raising her hand to give her a slap in the face for this bold speech, when she suddenly perceived that she had no clothes upon her arm.

“How comes it that thou standest there with thy arms folded idly before thee ? Where are my good veils and robes of fine linen ?”

“I have left them at the shore,” said Gudrun ; “and I reck little if you never find them again.”

When Gerlinta heard this she was well-nigh choked with rage. As soon as she could speak she burst out



into the bitterest reviling of Gudrun and all her kin.

"This comes," she said, "because I have dealt gently with thee, according to Hartmut's desire. But I will spare thee no longer ! I will break thy haughty spirit this night, if God spares me."

Then she bade one of the churls strip the prickliest boughs off a great hawthorn that grew in the courtyard, and bind them up into a rod ; and caused others to tie Gudrun fast to the bedstead in a chamber near at hand. All the women wept when they saw this ; and some of her own people entreated her to forbear ; but she vowed she would strip the skin off Gudrun's white shoulders, and beat her as long as she could stand over her.

Gudrun, nothing dismayed, said to her :

"Beat me if you list with the rod of thorns ; but know this, I will wed King Hartmut to-morrow, and then will I pay back every blow fourfold."

"Wilt thou in truth wed Hartmut?" asked the queen. "If I believed that I would gladly forgive thee for the loss of the veils, and a thousand more to boot."

"I have spoken it," said Gudrun. "Go tell Hartmut that I bow myself to his will, and beseech him to come to me with all haste."

When the king's servants heard these words, two or three of them ran speedily to Hartmut's hall, where he sat conversing with his father's knights.



"Give me largess," said the first comer. "I bring you good news. Hilda's daughter greets you, and desires that you shall straightway visit her in her chamber. She will be strange to you no longer ; she has bethought herself more wisely."

"Thou liest in vain," said Hartmut, sadly. "If the news were true I would give thee rare gifts, a burg and many an acre of good land besides ; for I should rejoice that I had won my life's delight."

Presently there came a second messenger.

"Let me share your gifts," he said. "The noble maid promises she will love you, and be your queen. I learned it from her own lips."

When the knight heard this he sprang joyfully from his seat, and hastened to Gudrun, full of bliss and thankfulness that God had at last granted him his dearest wish.

She was standing in her little chamber, wet and cold as she had come from the shore. Her heart smote her when she saw the young king's face shining with joy ; and she came forward to greet him, which she had never done before. When she drew near he saw that her eyes were filled with tears ; and he sought to embrace her.

"Not so," said the noble maid. "A great king like you must not embrace a poor washing wench. When you have put the ring on my finger, and the crown on my head, and shown me to your knights as your queen, then you may clip and kiss me in honour."



The young man stepped back, mindful of courteous behaviour, and answered :

“Beautiful one, if you will deign to love me, I and all belonging to me shall spare nothing in your service. Give me your commands, and I will see that they are fulfilled.”

“Is it indeed so ?” said Gudrun, “and shall I, poor forsaken maid, command here ? My first desire therefore is, that you shall send to me all my maidens who are dwelling with Gerlinta’s women, that they may pass the evening with me.”

“It shall be done,” said the king ; and forthwith he sent his squire to bid them come.

They came in a joyful crowd ; and greeted their dear mistress with loving words, and Hartmut saw that they were meanly clothed, and that their hands and hair showed they had been forced to lead a hard life. He likewise perceived that Gudrun had bare feet, and was more scantily clothed than any of them.

“You see, King Hartmut, how your mother has used us. Do you hold this to be honourable treatment ?”

The knight spake not for shame and vexation ; and she continued :

“If you love me, Hartmut, order the servants to prepare warm baths for us all ; and send fitting garments for my women.”

“They shall have the richest robes and jewels from my mother’s coffers,” answered Hartmut ; and he bade



the chamberlains bring choice robes of silk and samite, and clasps and chains of gold for each of them; and when they had bathed and apparelled themselves, they were so fair and stately that the least among them seemed a fitting mate for a king; but Gudrun surpassed them all in comely looks. Hartmut waited for them in the hall; and caused his cousins, who were noble and valiant knights, to serve round draughts of spiced wine and mead, and appointed them to be cup-bearers and chamberlains to the maidens as long as they should abide in Cassian. Likewise he sent to his sister Ortrun, bidding her apparel herself, that she might come and greet his betrothed. Ortrun came with all speed, bringing in her hand a diadem sparkling with precious stones.

“Blessed be God,” said she, “that I have lived to see this day! Now thou wilt love my brother, and dwell with us in peace and friendship. Behold what I have brought thee, the crown Queen Gerlinta wore when she was wedded; and which she gave to me that I might wear it on the day of my betrothal.”

“God reward thee,” answered Gudrun. “I know thy love, and the tears thou hast wept for me; and I will do thee good service when the day comes that thou shalt ask it.”

After this the twain sat down to the evening meal; and all their damsels, Hegelings and Normans, sat with them, and ate and drank joyfully together, pledging each other with kind wishes. It grew late, and Ger-



linta admonished her daughter to withdraw, promising that she should visit Gudrun again early in the morning ; whereupon all the Norman dames went out bowing themselves to Gudrun ; the old queen likewise making an obeisance, and bidding God keep her safe. Last of all went Hartmut, who was loth to leave Gudrun's presence ; for she was the delight of his eyes. Gudrun bade him a kindly good night ; and entreated moreover that he would send messengers to bid his friends to the wedding, that she might see if his nobles desired her for their queen. The eager Hartmut, full of joy at these words, tarried not a moment, but sent off a hundred of his best men to bid all the nobles far and near to his wedding feast. He little knew what a wedding feast was preparing for him, with fire and sword ! Meanwhile the Hegelings sat round the board, gazing sorrowfully at their mistress ; for it gave them little joy that she had yielded to Hartmut and forsaken her home and friends. Gudrun bade them drink and make merry ; but they sat as mute as mourners at a funeral, until Hiltburga exclaimed aloud :

“Woe is me, poor maid ! now I must abide for ever in this cruel land ;” wherewith she began to weep, and the whole sixty joined in, one after another, until they were all weeping round the table.

At this sight Gudrun could not contain herself, but laughed loud and long. Gerlinta heard the laugh in her bed-chamber, and straightway rose up and sought her son Hartmut.



"Beware, my son," she said. "Terror and ruin are coming over this land. Gudrun has laughed, she who for fourteen years has never smiled!"

"Let her laugh," answered Hartmut. "It pleases me well that she should make merry with her women."

"Be warned in time," said his mother. "She has, of a surety, received some token or message from her friends. I tell thee, Hartmut, that laugh of Gudrun struck like a knife to my heart. It told me that thou and thy father would lose life and honour."

"You disquiet yourself in vain," answered Hartmut. "I fear not that the Hegelings will trouble us now, seeing that they have left the maid fourteen years in our hands. Let us sleep in peace."

Midnight was at hand, and Gudrun bade the chamberlains light them to their sleeping-rooms. The pages went before her with wax tapers, and led her into a lofty hall where stood thirty snow-white beds, with gold brodered coverlets and hangings of silk of Damascus, greener than clover. The stewards and chamberlains followed with sleeping draughts of wine and mead in golden cups. When they were all in, Gudrun sent away the chamberlains, saying :

"Now, sleep in peace, good servants of Hartmut, I and my people are weary, and rejoice that we shall have a good night's rest, the first we have known in this land."

The proud Norman knights, of Hartmut's kin, bowed low to her and took their leave. When they

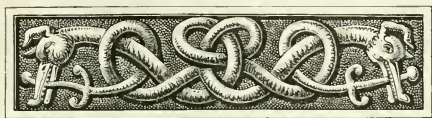


were alone Gudrun bade the maidens bar the door. They barred it fast with four strong bolts ; the walls were three spans thick, so that no eavesdropper could hear aught within the chamber.

This done, she turned to them and said : " Now drink the good red wine, and strengthen yourselves for the morrow, and laugh instead of weeping ; for I tell you, this day I have kissed my brother Ortwin, and my betrothed King Herwig. Look to it, which of you is first to awake me in the morning, and say, arise Gudrun, thy friends are at hand ; for to her I will give a burg, and gold, and rich lands, when I am counted among the queens."

Then the women all laid themselves to rest, and slept soundly, knowing that their brothers and friends were at last coming to release them from their prison.





## CHAPTER XX.

### *How the Hegelings took Cassian.*

WHEN the two knights left Gudrun they rowed swiftly, and the wind favouring them, they reached the shore where the hosts lay encamped just before sundown. The chief warriors came to meet them, eager to hear the tidings which they had brought from Cassian. They marvelled greatly when they learned that they had seen Gudrun and Hiltburga, and had speech with them, but their wonder turned to wrath, when they heard how Gudrun was kept in thrall by Gerlinta, and made to wash for the Norman dames. Some wept for very pity ; and Wat of Sturmland raged like an angry lion in the midst of them, and swore with a great oath that he would dye the garments which her hands had cleansed, red with the blood of Gerlinta and her kin.

Anon they began to consider how they should take Cassian. Wat was of the mind that they should straightway get the ships in readiness and go aboard with all speed ; and the wise Frut likewise counselled them to shun delay.

“For,” he said, “the Normans will of a surety



learn our coming on the morrow, and carry off the women to some secret hiding-place ; we must therefore surround Cassian before daybreak."

Many doubted that they could reach the harbour of Cassian by night, seeing that it was six leagues round the coast, and that their pilot, who had not been on the shores for years, knew not clearly where the rocks and sand-banks lay ; but Wat would not hearken to their fears.

"There must be no sleep to night," he said. "The air is still and the moon shines clear. Bring your horses and men aboard the ships ; and we shall reach Cassian safely before to-morrow's dawn."

They did as he commanded ; and the wind blowing steadily towards Cassian, they reached the haven just as the moon went down, two hours before sunrise, and anchored their ships near the smooth sands which lay about a league distant from the city. Wat bade them land quietly, lest they should rouse the folk in the city : by good luck they got the horses ashore without tumult, and were all safe upon the dry sand an hour before day-break. Wat of Sturmland, perceiving that the young warriors were weary for lack of sleep, bade them lie down upon the ground with their shields under their heads.

"But take heed," he said, "that your slumbers be light ; for he who would do good service upon the morrow must be in the saddle by daybreak.

"Hartmut has fourteen hundred warriors of renown



in the burg ; the people of the city, who are well skilled in the use of arms, will bring two thousand more ; if we suffer them to gain time the land will be roused, and Ludwig may yet escape our swords.

“ Sleep, that ye may gather strength for the morrow, but with your swords at hand, and your steeds ready saddled. I will keep watch upon the hill that overlooks the city, and when the red star yonder in the south dips his head in the brine, I will blow in my great horn that all the host shall hear.

“ Now mark me well. Ye have heard how bravely your fathers fought at Waleis, how they rendered up their lives like heroes upon the Wulpensand, and ye have sworn to avenge their death upon the false and cunning Normans.

“ Therefore, when I blow my great horn for the first time, spring to your feet, and see that your arms are ready to your hand, and give your horses to drink that they may be fresh for the fight.

“ When I blow the second time, let each man spring into his saddle, and fall into his place behind his leader.

“ When I blow for the third time, gather round Queen Hilda’s banner, and ride after me towards the walls of Cassian.”

The young heroes hearkened to his words with reverence, and promised to be ready at the first blast of his horn ; then laid themselves upon the dry sand, and were soon soundly asleep.



After the space of an hour, the red star went down upon the edge of the sea, and Wat of Sturmland, standing upon the hill, blew a great blast on his horn, which was heard in the land for miles round.

The sleepers sprang from the ground, seized their weapons, and held themselves ready. Now the sound of Wat's horn had reached the chamber where Gudrun lay, and wakened a young maid, who, stealing on tiptoe to the window, looked over the bay and beheld the glimmer of spears and helms upon the sands on the other side. Joyfully she ran towards Gudrun's bed.

"Awake, mistress," she cried; "the host of the Hegelings is at hand! Their ships are anchored in the bay; the sands glitter with their spears and helmets. Now we shall in truth be delivered from our foes."

While she spoke the Earl of Sturmland blew a second blast, which Gudrun heard, and, springing from her bed and running to the window, she saw that the plain and the beach on the other side of the bay were covered by a great and shining host, who stood, still as death, with their faces turned towards Cassian. But instead of laughing for joy like those around her, she wrung her hands and wept, saying:

"Woe is me that I was ever born! How many noble hearts will taste bitter death this day, and for my sake!"

Meanwhile the watchers of the burg marked naught; for some slept, and others drank wine in the



watch-house. Their master King Ludwig likewise slept heavily, little thinking that a thousand swords were pointed at his throat ; but the wakeful Gerlinta was aroused by the sound of the horn and the tumult in Gudrun's chamber, and went to the window full of fear. Even then the watcher's voice smote her ear.

"To arms, ye men of Normandy ! Ye have slept too long. The foe is at the gate !"

And she saw that the plain was thick beset with spears ; and a thousand flags and pennons waved in the morning wind. She ran back to the bed, and shook her husband by the shoulder.

"Arise, King Ludwig ! Ten thousand foes are at the gate ! Gudrun's laugh will cost us dear this day."

Ludwig roused himself and rubbed his eyes ; then looked forth from the window.

"My eyes are dim," he said ; "I see a great crowd of men ; but peradventure it is the pilgrims who come hither each spring in hosts to buy food. Call Hartmut. He will tell us who they be."

While he gazed, Wat of Sturmland blew for the third time on his horn, and the earth trembled and the corner stones of the burg were shaken. So they awakened Hartmut, and he went up into the turret and looked forth.

"I see the banners of twenty lands !" he cried, "and foremost among them the standard of the Hegelings. It is our old foe Wat of Sturmland, with Frut and Horand, and the knights Morung and Irolt,



who have come to pay off the score they owe us for the Wulpensand. I will read you their banners as though they were a book. That great banner of brown silk, with a man's head upon it in gold, belongs to King Siegfried of Moorland, a valiant sword, who will give us tough work. Yon to the right, with red stripes and two crossed swords, belongs to Ortwin the king of Nortland, whose father we slew. The banner to the left, of blue silk with a mermaid upon it, is King Herwig's of Zealand; and the flag of green and gold is Irolt's, the valiant knight from Holstein. The black banner which has a burg in flames for its device, belongs to Wat the Earl of Sturmland; and the great standard in the midst, covered with gold broidery, is Queen Hilda's, who should have been my mother-in-law. My troth, this is a grim wedding-feast that is brewing for us! Call up all my men; for the foes are already moving towards the walls."

Then he ran through the burg, and roused all his knights, who speedily armed themselves, and mustered about a thousand strong in the great courtyard. Besides these were three thousand men of the cities, who had armed themselves and come to the king's help, with whom Ludwig purposed to make a sally from the east gate, leaving Hartmut and his chosen men to face the foe on the west side of the burg. While Hartmut was arming himself for the fight, there came to him Gerlinta, who flung her arms round his neck and wept bitterly.



“Go not forth from the gate, my son, or thou wilt perish. I had ill dreams last night ; I know of a surety that thy father will die ; and if I lose thee, all joy of life will be taken from me.”

Hartmut, who was in an angry mood, would not listen to her.

“Go to your women,” he said, “and bid them go on weaving their golden tapestry ; and send the noble maid Gudrun to wash at the shore, as erst you did. You thought she had neither kinsmen nor servants. Lo, they stand yonder in thousands !”

“Woe is me !” said Gerlinta. “All that I did was for thy sake, seeing that thy life was bitter to thee without her love ; and now thou dost chide me for it.”

And she lamented and wrung her hands ; and all her women wept with her, for they saw plainly that the end was come.

Anon she roused herself, dried her eyes, and went down into the court. Hartmut, wearing his golden armour, sat upon his white horse at the head of his knights, waiting for a sign from king Ludwig. Gerlinta embraced his knees as he sat upon his steed, and said :

“Dear son, I entreat thee, by the love thou didst bear me when thou wert yet a little child, abide within these walls. I have great stores of corn and wine in our granaries and cellars ; man the walls, and strengthen the gates ; the men can fling darts, and shoot arrows upon the Hegelings ; and I and my women will throw



down stones and scalding lead from the windows. Trust me, we will soon weary out our foes."

"How, mother!" said Hartmut. "Would you have me hide myself before the Hegelings, like a fox in its hole, until I am unearthed by the Earl of Sturm-land? Better that I should go forth and die by Ortwin's hand, than that the old crones should sing how the nidering Hartmut lay crouched behind the walls of Cassian!"

When Gerlinta saw that he was not to be moved by her entreaties, she staunched her tears and began to bestir herself. Firstly she bade two churls watch the door of the chamber where Gudrun and her maids sat, that none might pass out. When she had seen with her own eyes that they could not escape, she called the women together, and made some gather stones and carry them up to the ramparts, while others fetched the sharpest swords and axes out of the armoury, and these she delivered to the knights, saying:

"Strike home; you fight with your lives in your hands. Bring my son back alive and sound, and I will give you great riches; and if any of you fall, trust to us that your orphans shall receive the treasures and honours which would have been yours."

The knights heard her words in silence, and took their places behind Hartmut, close together, so that their swords made a wall of gleaming steel. Presently Ludwig blew his horn; both gates were thrown open, and the Normans rode out. The front lines of the



Hegelings were but a stone's throw from the gates. For a space the two hosts stood still and gazed on each other in dead silence ; suddenly a horse neighed on the side of the Hegelings, and they began to move towards the burg. Wat shouted for joy when he beheld his foes.

"By my troth," he said, "the Normans are all leaving the walls, and if we lay our plans well, we shall be masters of the burg before even."

"Who is that knight in the golden helmet," asked Ortwin, "who sits so proudly on his horse, and wields his sword as though he defied us all?"

"It is Hartmut, son of Ludwig, who slew thy father," answered Wat.

"It is well that he is here," answered Ortwin ; "for now he shall pay me for his father's deeds."

Then he rode swiftly towards Hartmut, who in the same instant spurred his steed on to meet him ; and the twain encountered with a shock that threw both horses upon their haunches. Speedily recovering themselves, they sprang to the ground and set on each other with their swords, while their men fought with cross-bows and spears. Young Ortwin bore himself bravely ; but Hartmut, who was the better swordsman, presently gave him a lunge in the side that brought him to the ground. Horand, perceiving Ortwin's danger, threw himself before him, and covered him with his shield. Hartmut, being thus robbed of his kingly prey, assailed the brave singer with fresh fury,



and with a stroke of his axe disabled his right arm ; whereupon Horand's followers came between them, and bore their master out of the fight. Hartmut now looked round him for a fresh foe who might be worthy of his renown, and seeing Frut, with whom he had fought upon the Wulpensand, dared him to the combat. The gray-beard shewed himself no whit less nimble and skilful than of yore ; and in cunning feints and bold strokes he was a match for the daring Norman.

While the two heroes disputed, the fight raged hot and fierce on all sides ; the air was filled with cries of pain and fury, and the Norman soil was drenched with the blood of its sons, for Irolt and Morung, with their men, picked out the flower of Hartmut's knights, and laid one proud head after another in the dust. Siegfried of Moorland found himself work with King Ludwig ; but the chances of the fight divided them, and the Norman king looked out for Wat, whom he greatly desired to encounter. At this moment Herwig espied him, and knowing him by his great stature, posted himself in his way crying :

“ Ho there, Ludwig of Normandy ! ”

At these words Ludwig threw up his vizor, saying :

“ I am here. Who calls me ? ”

“ Herwig, King of Zealand,” answered the other, “ the betrothed husband of Gudrun. It is thou who didst slay good King Hetel on the Wulpensand. Thou didst, moreover, carry off my dear bride Gudrun,



and hold her captive here in shame and sorrow for many years. Defend thyself, for I have sworn thou shalt die by my hand."

Ludwig laughed in scorn.

"Thou shalt never taste Gudrun's lips again," he answered. "Many a brave young blood have I sent to the grave before thee; so shrive thyself with all speed, and prepare to follow King Hetel."

Herwig, enraged at this speech, rushed furiously upon Ludwig, who repulsed him swiftly; and with a well-aimed thrust of his spear brought him down from his horse. Before he could raise himself Ludwig pinned him down, and baring his dagger sought to pierce his heart. Herwig's squires, at the risk of their own lives, flung themselves upon the Norman king, but not before he had given their master a deep wound in the side. Presently came two or three more of his friends, who bore him, stunned and bleeding, off the field, and laid him down on a soft green mound, where his wounds were bound by a leech. When the noble knight came to himself his first thought was whether his dear bride Gudrun had seen his fall.

"She has seen me overthrown by the wicked Ludwig," he said. "I shall not hold myself worthy to kiss her lips until I have wiped away this stain."

While he communed thus with himself, he saw Ludwig with a handful of men striving to enter the gate of the burg, while Horand and his knights strove to cut them off. Those within the walls helped Ludwig so well



with stones, darts, and arrows, that the Danes yielded, and suffered him to reach the gate. He was about to enter when Herwig, albeit he was sorely wounded, spurred his horse after him, and dared him in a loud voice to turn round and fight. Ludwig turned swiftly back at the sound of Herwig's voice, his eyes fierce as those of a hungry lion.

"Thou art not yet content, foolish lad," he said. "Come on, and I will give thee for food to the wolves and ravens."

So saying, he spurred his steed furiously, and strove to ride Herwig down, which he had well nigh done, for the king of Zealand, being dizzy from loss of blood, could not manage his horse. Nevertheless, he brought the beast to its feet again, and dealt Ludwig a hearty blow with his axe. To this the Norman answered with a thrust of his spear, which broke the bandages of Herwig's wounds, and made the blood flow in streams, so that the beholders looked upon him as dead; for his face, with loss of blood, was white as one that has been buried three days. But calling aloud the name of Gudrun, the brave Herwig lifted his sword with fresh strength, and gave Ludwig a mighty blow upon the head, which broke the band of his helmet and left his forehead bare. Then with a second lusty stroke he felled him to the earth, and when his squires came and raised him up they saw that there was no life in him. Thus did Herwig avenge the death of King Hetel upon the Wulpensand. The brave warrior escaped narrowly



with his life, for the wounds he had got at Ludwig's hand were many and deep, and could scarcely be staunched by the skill of all the leeches.

Ludwig's knights, seeing their master dead, again strove to enter the gate, but Horand kept them off, and the Moorlanders coming up behind, they were speedily surrounded. Their banner was taken, the standard-bearer slain, and the greater part of them, scorning to beg for their lives, were killed fighting.

One or two, however, found their way back into the burg, and took the news of Ludwig's death to Gerlinta. There was a crowd of people on the wall, fathers who had sons in the fight, maids who were looking for their sweethearts, and weeping wives and mothers. In the midst of these stood Gerlinta, whose eyes followed everywhere the helmet of her son Hartmut, as he threaded his way through the foe, marking his path with slain and wounded. Suddenly the escaped knights, battered and bleeding, came running up the steep and narrow way, crying, "King Ludwig is fallen;" whereupon she gave a loud shriek, and the women wept with her, and the old men seeing at that moment the standard of Normandy fall, joined their lamentations to the rest. The cry reached the ears of Hartmut through the din of the fight; he looked round and saw his mother and a great crowd of women on the ramparts weeping and wringing their hands, and began to fear that the Hegelings had forced the gates and were threatening their lives. Thereupon he called



his knights round him, and bade them fight their way back into the burg, that they might succour the women ; but alack ! of the thousand who had ridden out with him, he could only muster two hundred, and many of these were sorely wounded. Hartmut's brow grew dark.

"Ye have fought well," he said ; "all I can do to reward ye shall be willingly done. The living shall have lands and honours. The dead shall have our love and undying remembrance. Remember how we fought the Saxons at Ahlden, one against ten, and overcame them. Keep close together at my back. Spur your horses to their full speed, and we shall break through these Zealanders and reach the gate."

His knights closed round him in a firm body, and riding hard and wielding their spears to good purpose, brake through Herwig's men, who were all on foot ; but when they drew near to the gate they saw Wat of Sturmland standing in their way with five hundred men who had hitherto dealt no blow in the fight. Hartmut reined in his steed, looked behind him and around him, and up to the burg. He saw his mother and the women upon the walls, and Gudrun and her maids, who looked from a lofty window near at hand ; but there was no sign of Ludwig,

"The day wears an ill front," he said. "The Hege-lings hold the burg encompassed ; Horand keeps the west gate ; Ortwin is at the south ; behind us is the sea ; before us Wat of Sturmland. Good squire, ride



up yon little hill, and haply you may see king Ludwig's banner, for we have sore need of help."

He wist not that his father was dead. The squire rode up the hill and down again, returning with a sorrowful face.

"I see not the banner of Normandy," he said. "Our foes are round us on every side, their spears as thick and close as blades of grass in a meadow."

Hartmut's face grew darker.

"Good knights," he said, "spring from your horses, and take each your battle-axe in your hand. If we do not gain the gate, we shall all die by the hand of the Hegelings."

The Normans sprang from their saddles, and shoulder to shoulder, each with his gleaming axe in his hand, with faces white and grim as death, sought to hew their way through Wat's men. Under thick clouds of dust, they wrestled hand to hand with the Hegelings ; and no voice was heard save when one or other, pierced to the heart, fell to the ground with a heavy groan. Those on the walls beheld the sight in dumb fear. Gerlinta cried aloud when she saw Hartmut's danger, and seizing some great loose stones on the top of the wall, she flung them down upon Wat, who was beneath ; his shoulder-greaves were broken, but he only shook his brawny arm, and said to his men, who bent their heads to escape the boulders, "it is but an April shower."

And now Hartmut, unhelmed, unhorsed, bleeding



from many wounds, and fighting like a lion at bay, drew near to him.

"Hold the gate," Wat said to Frut, "while I go to meet Hartmut;" and springing from his horse, he brandished his great axe and bore down upon the luckless knight like a tiger on his prey. But Hartmut, all wounded as he was, fought so valiantly that the bitterest of his foes could not refrain from crying, "Well done;" and some even cried that he should be taken prisoner, and his life should be spared, for they knew Wat would give him no quarter. Gerlinta saw his peril. She knew that Ludwig was dead, that she should find no mercy from the terrible Wat of Sturm-land; and wrath and despair seized her soul.

"Which of ye," she cried, turning to her hirelings, "will slay Gudrun and her maids? I would give him who did this deed a helmet full of gold."

Then one of the churls, a base and cowardly wretch, whose soul was given over to greed, took a great sword and went to the chamber to slay them. They shrieked and ran about the room; and Gudrun going to the window cried aloud for help, which caused Hartmut and the Earl of Sturm-land to pause in their combat. Then Hartmut perceived how one of his churls had seized Gudrun by her long hair, and he called out in a voice of thunder:

"Thou base wretch, wilt thou murder the maid? I will hang thee and all thy kin on the gallows if a hair of her head is hurt."



At these words the caitiff shrunk away, and told his fellows of Hartmut's threat, so that none of them dared to harm the maids.

Anon came Ortrun, and flung herself at Gudrun's feet, weeping and saying :

"Have pity on me, noble maid, and remember how I comforted thee in thy wretchedness when none else pitied thee. Behold, they have slain my father ; is it not blood enough ? And now Wat of Sturmland seeks Hartmut's life ; and if thou wilt not help me my brother will die beneath his sword.

"I have not forgotten the love thou didst shew me," answered Gudrun, "and how I promised to help thee in the day of trouble ; but how can I stay Wat's hand, unless I were armed and could go and throw myself between them ?"

However, she went to the window, hoping to espy Herwig, or her brother Ortwin, and leaning from the casement beckoned with her hand. It chanced that Herwig saw her ; for when his wounds had been bound up he had made his men lead his horse towards the burg, greatly fearing lest his beloved Gudrun should come to harm through Gerlinta's malice. Going towards the window he asked what she desired, and Gudrun, who knew not his voice, which was faint from his having lost much blood, said :

"I am Gudrun, daughter of Queen Hilda. Are you one of my people ?"

"Truly, sweet mistress," he answered, "I am



not of thy people, yet thou didst once tell me that I was dearer to thee than any of thy kin. I am Herwig, thy betrothed husband ; what dost thou desire of me ? for I will not fail to fulfil all thy commands."

"Now God be praised thou art here," said Gudrun. "Ride swiftly to Wat, who is fighting with Hartmut, and bid him spare the brave knight's life."

"I will go," answered Herwig ; "but Wat will not hearken to me. As well might I strive to rend the prey from the jaws of the hungry lion."

"Then if need be thou shalt hinder him by force," answered Gudrun. "I entreat thee for the sake of this dear maid Ortrun, who is weeping for her brother."

Thereupon Herwig rode towards the gate, and found how Wat had thrown Hartmut down and was about to slay him. He called out in a loud voice :

"Stay your hand ! Gudrun bids you spare his life."

"Go to," answered Wat ; "where should I be if I followed women's fancies ? I have sworn death to Hartmut and all the viper's brood, and shall I spare him at a woman's bidding ?"

Thus saying, he lifted his axe over Hartmut's head with flaming eyes. Herwig, seeing that words were of no avail, flung himself over Hartmut, pushing Wat's arm aside, and got for his pains such a crack on the skull that he fell to the ground like one dead.



Wat thought in good sooth he had killed him, and this cooled his rage; so turning on his heel he left the twain to the care of their men, who bore them into a tent and looked to their wounds.







## CHAPTER XXI.

### *How the Earl of Sturmland slew Gerlinta.*

HARTMUT was a prisoner and Ludwig slain ; but about two hundred knights, who had fled into the burg, with certain of the citizens and the queen's servants, continued to defend the walls, flinging down darts, stones, and heavy missiles, upon the Danes, who, led by Wat, strove to burst open the gate.

To these came presently the Moorlanders with King Siegfried and Ortwin ; huge battering-rams were brought and plied with furious shocks ; and suddenly the gates gave way at their fastenings in the wall, and fell down, crushing some of the Normans. The Hegelings and Moorlanders rushed in, full of fury, and assailed the handful of knights who defended the approach to the king's house. These retreated into the hall and up the great stair, their foes following them closely. One after another they were slain upon the steps ; the passage was blocked up by their corpses, and the stair was slippery with their blood. The Hegelings, climbing over their bodies, ascended to the great tower and pulled down the Norman banner,



setting up Queen Hilda's in its stead. Meanwhile the Moorlanders sacked the town, and slew the people ; and of the burghers not one male was left, save the young children, whom they spared because of their tender years, and some old men who escaped into the woods and there perished miserably of hunger.

Within the burg all was terror and confusion. Wat with his men slew those belonging to the queen's household ; the courts and chambers were dyed with gore, and the sounds of woe and horror on every side filled Gudrun's heart with grief. She would have left her chamber to seek Wat, but Ortrun clung to her knees, and would not let her go, crying that Wat would slay her.

"Fear not," answered Gudrun. "Go and stand among my women, and I will take heed that naught befalls thee."

Ortrun hid herself among the women ; and presently came the greater part of the Norman dames about the court, and some thirty knights and squires who had fled for their lives, whom Gudrun bade hide themselves in the cellars until Wat's wrath should have abated.

The door was kept by certain trusty knights of Zealand, who would suffer none to come in save at Gudrun's bidding, for King Herwig and Ortwin had taken thought for the maidens' safety, knowing that the Moorlanders were reckless in the fight. While they all waited in fear and trembling for what might befall,



Gerlinta came running into the room with Hergart, Gudrun's faithless cousin. Throwing herself at Gudrun's feet, she cried :

"Mercy, mercy ; save me from the terrible Wat, who is even now at the door seeking to slay me !"

"You never shewed me mercy," answered Gudrun "You sought to slay me with hunger and cold and hardship. Wherefore should I spare you? As for thee, Hergart, thou knowest how thou didst forsake us in our woe, and mock at our troubles. Why should I care what befalls thee?"

Hergart, sore weeping, answered :

"My husband is slain and all his kin. Have pity on me, for we were children together."

Even while she spoke the Earl of Sturmland stood in the doorway, grim and gaunt ; his ell-long beard and his garments bedabbled with blood. Grinding his teeth he fiercely scanned the trembling women, who stood there speechless, and white with fear. Gudrun stepped forward to meet him, saying :

"Thou art welcome, good Earl of Sturmland. I should greatly rejoice to see thee, but for the woe thy hand hath wrought this day."

"I greet thee, fair maid," answered Wat. "Art thou indeed Hilda's daughter? and who be these women who are with thee?"

"They are the sixty maids who were brought with me from Matalan ; and this is my cousin Hiltburga, who has been at my side in all my troubles ; and this



young one is Ortrun, Hartmut's sister, and these are her maids, whom I entreat thee to spare for the sake of the friendship Ortrun shewed me in my captivity. And now, good Wat, put off thy armour, and wash the blood from thy hands and face, for I am not wont to see men in such a fearful plight."

The old earl was fain to quit the chamber at these words, which Gudrun had spoken with intent that he should leave them and give her a chance of hiding Gerlinta; but he was back again in a trice, having heard from those who kept guard that Gerlinta was among the women. Striding into the midst of them, he said in a voice of fury:

"Where is Gerlinta, the old she-wolf, who caused King Hetel's death, and made his daughter into her washing-maid?"

"She is fled," answered Gudrun.

Wat was wild with rage. "Yield her up on the instant," he cried, "or I will slay all these women, friend or foe."

The women were sore afraid when they heard this; and one of them pointed out Gerlinta. In the twinkling of an eye Wat seized her by the arms, and dragged her from the chamber screaming, to the horror of all who heard; Gudrun followed, begging for her life, but Wat heeded her not. When they were out in the hall, he said:

"Now, mistress, you shall never send King Hetel's daughter to wash again." And twisting his hand in



her long gray hair, he raised his sword and struck off her head with one blow.

Coming back to the chamber he said : "Where is her daughter, that I may slay her likewise?"

Gudrun wept bitterly, and said : "Spare her for the love of me ; for I promised her peace when she fled into my chamber."

He answered : "Since you have promised her peace she shall live ; but now deliver up to me the Duchess Hergart, who forsook you and went over to the Normans, and wedded the king's cup-bearer."

At these words Hergart, unable to contain herself, cried out, and Wat, perceiving where she stood, strode up to her with a terrible countenance.

"If they had offered you half the world you should have refused it," he said. "You have ill served your mistress in this strange land."

The others, seeing his purpose, cried in one voice, "Spare her life !" but he answered with a laugh :

"I am chamberlain here, and I warrant you I will keep the maids to their duty." Thereat he struck off her head ; and the women, screaming terribly, all took flight.

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And now the bloody day drew near its end ; the streets grew quiet, for the warriors, weary of the work of slaughter, laid themselves to rest, and the moon rising bright over the sea lighted the streets of the desolated city. The chief knights doffed their armour



and washed the rust from their brows, and went to greet Gudrun, who sat in the great hall with her maids around her ; and at her side Herwig, who, despite the torment of his wounds, would not leave her presence to seek rest as the leech had bidden him. The first who kissed her was Ortwin ; after him came Wat of Sturm-land and Horand, whom she greeted with especial love as her dear friend and cousin, and bade him tell her news of her mother.

Anon came the king of Moorland, with Irolt and Morung ; and to each she spake gracious words, likewise to the earls and landgraves who came with them. Meanwhile Ortrun and the Norman women wept sorely for Hartmut, who lay nigh to death. The clamour reached Gudrun's ears where she sat, and she besought her brother to send a skilful leech to the young king. But Ortwin denied her, saying :

“ I should not grieve if he died, seeing what shame he put upon thee ; moreover our leeches have work enough with our own men.”

Gudrun grieved at this answer ; and Herwig, seeing her thus troubled, straightway sent his own leech, who presently came back and told them how he had staunch- ed Hartmut's wounds. Gudrun grew joyful again at this news ; and she thanked the king that he had done this for love of her.

They all supped together in great joy, and when the meal was over, and the women were gone, the knights debated what they should do next. Wat



counselled that they should pull down the city walls and raze the burg to the ground ; but Horand and Frut, who were mercifully inclined, spake against it, and Ortwin took their side. In the end they determined to bury the dead in the city, and set the burg in order, that the maidens might dwell therein while the hosts marched inland, to quell those Normans who might refuse to swear fealty to Hilda. This was done : Frut was left in charge of the city with a thousand good swords, and the others departed to subdue the land. Two months passed away before they returned ; for the folk withstood them in many places, and they were forced to lay siege to twenty castles, before they could bring the nobles under the yoke ; nevertheless, they came back safe and sound, having lost few men in the foray.

Many days passed before the ships were ready to sail from Cassian ; for there was much treasure to bring aboard, and hostages whom they dared not leave behind. At last all was ready, and Gudrun and her maidens joyfully left the land of their captivity. With them came Ortrun, whom Gudrun would not suffer to be parted from her, for she said :

“These Norman maids are mine ; Hartmut is my brother’s prisoner. Wat may have his will with the rest, but these are in my care, and I will see that no evil befalls them ;” and these words comforted Ortrun.

When Hartmut was taken from his prison, and



found that he was to be carried to the Hegelings' land, his proud heart was sorely abased, and he even besought Wat, saying :

"I will willingly render you all I have ; yea, forswear my crown and lands for ever, if you will let me go free."

But Wat answered :

"I never trusted a Norman unless I had him within the four walls of my dungeon ; nor will I trust thee, even if thou dost swear a thousand oaths. In sooth, I am little able to understand wherefore my nephew Ortwin should encumber himself with thee and the others. If he left it to my ordering, I would find a safe and sure way of scaping further troubles."

So Hartmut was forced to depart with them in Ortwin's ship ; and one after another the vessels disappeared from the harbour ; and with them went all the warriors, save a thousand who stayed in the burg with Morung, to hold the lands in Queen Hilda's name, until she should appoint a ruler.





## CHAPTER XXII.

### *How Gudrun was brought back to Matalan.*

It was about the season of harvest when Queen Hilda got a message from Ortwin telling how they had slain Ludwig and taken Hartmut prisoner, and were bringing home her daughter Gudrun, for whom she had sorrowed through many years. Great was the joy of the noble queen at these tidings, for her heart had been filled with misgivings because of Wat being so long away; and now, when her doubt and sorrow were turned into joy, she arrayed herself and all her people in garments of feasting, and made great preparations both inside and outside the burg. The messengers she would have rewarded with a helmet full of silver; but they would take naught, for they said :

“We are rich with the spoils of the Normans; Wat brings a ship-load of gold, besides jewels and arms of great worth.”

The burghers rejoiced with the queen that the fair maid of the Hegelings was to be restored to them; and each prepared to do his share in feasting the hosts. Tables were spread in the open air, and set out with the



choicest meats, the chambers were made ready for guests ; sheep and oxen were slaughtered and roasted whole, and great vats of mead and wine stood ready to slake the thirst of the war-worn heroes.

About two days after Ortwin's message had reached the queen the watchers on Matalan saw sails upon the distant sea. Straightway the news spread through the burg and town ; and Hilda and the people went down to the strand to meet Gudrun. The yellow shores were thronged by a great multitude ; for only the cradle-children and bed-ridden folk and those who tended them were left behind.

As the ships drew near there was a noise of drums, trumpets, horns, and flutes, from the shore, and those aboard the vessels answered with their horns and trumpets, and loud greetings and shouts of joy. Gudrun's ship was the first which reached the landing-place. The deck was thronged by fair and richly-dressed maidens, who descended from the vessel and walked towards Hilda, weeping for very joy that their feet again touched the soil of their beloved country. The queen said to the brave knight Irolt, who walked before them :

"Which of these maids is my daughter, for alack my eyes are grown so dim I know her not."

Whereupon Gudrun went up to her, and embraced her knees, and kissed her, weeping when she saw how her shining black hair had turned silvery white. After Gudrun came Wat, who made obeisance to the queen.



"Thou art welcome, Earl of Sturmland," she said, and kissed him likewise ; "how shall I repay thee for all thou hast done for me? If I made thee king of the land it would be but a little thing."

To this Wat answered :

"I want no crown. I desire nothing better than to be Wat, Earl of Sturmland, your true and faithful servant ; and that will I be to the end of my days."

Then the queen asked how they had fared.

"My heart was oft heavy through the long summer when I waited for your coming back," said she.

"Of a truth," answered Wat, "we left many slain behind us at Cassian ; for the Normans fought like devils ; but the land is yours, and the treasure, which we have with us in two great ships, likewise King Hartmut, whom I would well have liked to lay in the grave beside his father, but the women thwarted me."

After Wat came Frut of Daneland, whom the queen kissed and greeted ; him followed Horand, leading a comely maid with hair of chestnut brown ; and at her side walked Ortwin, whole and sound.

The queen embraced them both, and thanked Horand with words of love, that he had brought her son back safe from the wars, as she had prayed him at parting ; then she desired to know who the young maid might be, for she saw that she was not of the Hegelings.

"She is one whom you must love for my sake,



dear mother," answered Gudrun, "for she pitied me in my captivity. Give her the kiss of peace and friendship."

"I will kiss none whose kin are unknown to me," answered Hilda. "What is the maid called?"

"She is Ortrun, Hartmut's sister," answered Gudrun.

"How!" said Hilda. "Shall I kiss those who took my life's joy from me; who made my food and rest bitter to me for fourteen years! It were more fitting I should send her to death."

"Mother," answered Gudrun, "this young maid had no part in thy woes. Moreover, we have slain her father, and owe her some pity and love. Kiss her, I beseech thee, for she is orphaned and a captive."

But Hilda denied her, and Gudrun began to weep, upon which Hilda cried:

"Nay, it shall not be that thou hast sorrow on the first day of thy coming;" and kissed Ortrun and bade her welcome.

Then she asked:

"Where is Hiltburga, who shared thy troubles so faithfully, and helped thee to wash in the bitter winter days?"

And when the maid drew near, she bent her head and kissed her, saying:

"Loyalty like thine is beyond all price. What thou hast done shall not be forgotten while the land endures."



Anon was heard the clash of cymbals and wild music ; and Siegfried's ships entered the harbour, the Moorlanders singing a song. Hilda went forward to meet the king, and thanked him aloud before all that stood there, for that he had so freely spent his blood and treasure in bringing home her dear daughter. To which he answered, that he would gladly serve her at all times, and count himself honoured to receive her commands. Lastly came those who had charge of the treasures, which they laid at the queen's feet ; and when she had viewed them, she bade the knights enter the great hall and partake of the feast. Those who could not find space in the hall, feasted outside in booths decked with green boughs : and in the cool of the evening there was singing and dancing to pipes and tabors in open places about the city : while from Hilda's hall came the sound of harping and the voices of minstrels and warriors. That night they all slept in peace and content, and the next day feasted again : the poorest received from Hilda's hand wherewith to make merry ; every house in the city had guests, and the place was filled to overflowing with country folk, who came from Holstein and Danemark to meet their friends, and share in the spoils of the Normans.

In the midst of all these rejoicings Hartmut and his companions lay bound in a dungeon beneath the great tower, to the grief of the maid Ortrun, who ceased not to weep for them day and night.



Gudrun, who saw how deeply she sorrowed, could find no diversion, neither in hawking, hunting, minstrelsy, nor the other sports, wherewith the noble company beguiled the time ; and when five days had passed, being unable to endure the sight of the maiden's sorrow, she went to her mother and said :

"Dear mother, we have been told that we shall not repay hate with evil : therefore according to thy loving-kindness, I beseech thee to release King Hartmut from his bonds."

"Dear daughter," the queen answered, "this thing thou mayst not ask of me, for I have suffered untold woe from the hand of this prince of Normandy."

Then Ortrun fell upon her knees, saying :

"Mistress, set my brother free, and I will pledge my life that he will live in fealty to you all his days."

But Hilda would not be entreated, and forbade them to speak thereof. Next day, however, there came to her the sixty maidens who had been captives at Cassian ; and minded her how she had promised them a reward for all they had borne in their captivity ; and they now said, that the reward which they most desired was, that she should set Hartmut free, seeing that he had always shewn them courtesy ; and was as brave a knight as ever drew sword. Hilda was wroth with them, saying :

"Methinks the young man has bewitched you all, for ye cease not to vex me with entreaties day and



night ; though ye know well all the wrong and treachery I have endured from him and his people."

And Wat counselled her to deny them, saying :

"Trust not the Norman. If you set him free he will, perchance, slay us by treachery the next night."

Nevertheless, Gudrun would not be denied ; and ceased not to admonish her mother of forgiveness and charity ; Ortwin and Herwig likewise entreated her, until she, moved by their prayers, and weary of seeing so many tearful faces about her, sent down the chief gaoler to strike off the knight's fetters. When he was brought into her presence, and she had seen how frank and gracious he was of speech and mien, she could no longer bear him ill-will, but forgave him from her heart, and as earnest of her forgiveness, sent him a fine broidered surcoat of samite, a mantle, sword, and all that was needful for a knight ; and when he had bathed and put on these vestments, the women owned that there was not in Hilda's court a properer knight than he. In sooth they all bore him good will ; but he had never eyes nor ears for any woman in the world, save for the maid Gudrun, who, he knew surely, could never be his wife.

Nor were the men unfavourable to him ; for when he had dwelt among them a while, his courtesy so won upon them, that they forgot how a little time before they had sought each other's lives upon the battle-field. This pleased Gudrun greatly, for the noble maid who was so constant in love, that she



would have suffered the utmost cruelty of her enemies ere she would forsake her kin, could not endure to live in hate or coldness with anyone ; and she now began to consider how she might restore Hartmut his kingdom, and bind the two peoples fast in love.

The feast had lasted many days, and Siegfried and Herwig, thinking that they put the queen to great cost by the entertainment of their knights, asked her leave to depart ; but this she would not grant, saying that she counted on having them as her guests for weeks to come. Herwig answered that his young sister, who was an orphan, sorrowed for his absence ; likewise that the land had need of him, and he could therefore tarry no longer at Matalan. To this, Hilda, who knew how greatly he desired to lead his dear bride Gudrun back with him, although he forbore to urge his love-suit, answered :

“ Remain with us another month, and we will hold a great wedding-feast, and I will give Gudrun to be your wife.”

The brave knight was overjoyed at these words ; and sent straightway twelve of his chief nobles to fetch his sister to the wedding-feast.

Hilda began to prepare garments and veils of fitting splendour ; and when these were ready she called the maids and matrons round her, and gave to each a new robe and veil, besides jewels and trinkets, clothing four hundred of the Hegelings, and a hundred of the Norman women.



While all about the court were busied in preparing for the wedding-feast, Gudrun sent for Ortwin to speak privily with him, and when he was come she said :

“I have a certain desire concerning thee, which I would gladly see fulfilled before I depart with Herwig.”

He asked what it might be.

She answered : “That thou shouldst take the maid Ortrun to wife. She is beautiful, of noble birth, and gentle-hearted. If thou wilt wed her thou wilt be happy thy life long.”

“The maid pleases me well,” answered Ortwin, “but we are sworn foes to her race ; we slew her father, and she will remember that when she lies beside me in the night.”

“Have no fear,” answered Gudrun. “Give me thy word, and I promise thee Ortrun will take thee joyfully for her husband.”

To this Ortwin answered he must first take counsel with Frut ; and thereupon went to seek the old knight, and meeting Herwig on the way broke the matter to him.

Herwig was of the same mind as Gudrun, and Frut likewise. “Furthermore,” he said, “that there may be an end to the feud, we will give Hiltburga to Hartmut.”

This plan suited Ortwin’s humour ; and he bade Gudrun seek Hiltburga that she might learn if the maid were willing.



Hiltburga was nothing loath ; but she demurred, saying that Hartmut could not love her.

“That we will soon learn,” said Gudrun, and she desired that Hartmut should be sent to her straightway. When he had greeted her, she bade him be seated : “Take the place next my cousin Hiltburga. You knew her in days gone by. It was she who went down to wash with me upon the shore, when we were captives in Cassian.”

“You seek to punish me, fair maid,” answered Hartmut, who was abashed at her words ; “but remember, I knew not of it, nor did my father King Ludwig know it.”

“It is past and gone,” answered the maid ; and she then began to speak of other things, entertaining him with pleasant talk until he smiled again.

After a while she sent Hiltburga forth, and when she had gone, said : “Good Hartmut, you know that I am free from guile and you will believe that which I say to you is for your weal.”

“I know well, mistress Gudrun,” he answered, “that you will counsel naught but what is wise and good ; and I desire no better than to guide myself by one who is the fairest and best of women.”

“It is well,” she said. “Hearken then ; if you will take a wife from our people, and swear friendship to us for ever, you shall receive again your lands and your crown, and all that has been taken from you.”

“Before I answer,” said Hartmut, “let me know



whom you would give me for a wife, for the woman who wears my crown must be noble, and wise, and virtuous."

"You have proved her to be all this," answered Gudrun. "It is my cousin Hiltburga. Wed her, and you will have a true and loving wife."

Hartmut pondered upon these words, and Gudrun spake again, saying: "Thy sister promised a little while ago that she would wed my brother Ortwin, and rule with him in Nortland; if thou wilt take Hiltburga it will bind a fast friendship between us, and there will be no more hate nor bloodshed."

Hartmut answered, "If Ortwin weds my sister I will take Hiltburga, and she shall be crowned in Cas-sian;" and he promised it upon Gudrun's white hand, to the great joy of the maid.

When he was gone to seek Hiltburga she sent Ortwin to Wat of Sturmland, that he might tell him what she had done.

"The maid has done wisely," said Wat, "but I will not suffer them to have forgiveness until they have besought it of my mistress Queen Hilda, upon their bended knees."

But Gudrun would not hearken to this, knowing Hartmut's pride; and she chid Wat for believing that the queen was so hard of heart.

"Has she not given them the choicest vestments, and suffered them to sit at her right hand; and what has the maid Ortrun done to us? I promise thee that the queen will joyfully consent. Be ready with all



the chief knights in the great hall an hour before supper, and we will hold the betrothal."

So after sunset they all appeared in the great hall ; Frut and Horand, Irolt and Siegfried, Wat of Sturm-land and Herwig, with the earls and landgraves from Danemark and Holstein, clad in surcoats of broidered silk and wearing circlets of gold upon their heads, and the women were apparelled in silk and jewels, each seeming fairer than the other. Then the elder knights stood in a ring in the hall, and the bridegrooms came into the midst, and Gudrun and Hilda led their brides towards them, whom they kissed and embraced lovingly, after which they exchanged rings. Then followed feasting and merriment, and during the supper the minstrels sang sweetly in praise of love. Gudrun, who conversed with Herwig apart from the others, looked on with delight while the knights made pastime, and presently she said :

"Pity that the noble Siegfried should leave us without a mate. How would it be if he married thy sister?"

"It would suit me well," answered he ; "but if they were plighted I could not furnish her for the wedding as would beseem the bride of a rich king, for the Moorlanders left our land poor."

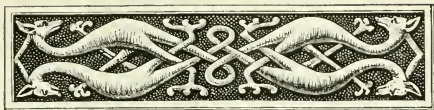
The words of Gudrun were told to Siegfried, who straightway came to her and thanked her for having taken thought of his loneliness. "In sooth," he said, "I have long wished to have a wife, and as for the



dower, if the maid pleases me I will take her with naught but the shift on her back."

A few days afterwards Herwig's sister came to Matalan, and when Gudrun and Herwig had conferred with her on the matter, they led Siegfried into her presence. The knight swore he had never seen a comelier maid, and she was not ill-pleased with him; though she was coy after the fashion of young damsels, and denied him many times before she promised to wed him. The end of it was that they likewise were betrothed in the presence of Hilda and all the nobles.





## CHAPTER XXIII.

### *The Wedding Feast.*

AT the end of a month all was ready for the great feast, and the day and the hour were fixed for the marriage of the four noble couples. The rejoicings began the day before the wedding with a great tourney outside the walls of the burg, in which all the warriors took part, and tilted right deftly, winning great praise from Frut and Horand, who sat to judge the games. Before the jousting was over the old heroes of Waleis rode into the lists and tilted with the younger warriors, who got both good precept and example at their hands. Hartmut fought likewise, and shewed such strength and skill that the beholders praised him loudly ; even Wat was forced to own that none there could excel him. After this five hundred squires took the sacrament in the burg chapel, and were made knights ; then followed great feasting and mirth until nightfall.

The next morning the four kings were wedded in the midst of a great and joyful company ; the wedding gifts were the richest ever seen in the Hegelings' land, and of these the greatest marvel was a robe which the



Earl of Sturmland gave to Gudrun, woven of gold tissue and intermixed with precious stones, such as rubies, amethysts, and the rarest pearls from Abalie. Hartmut and Ortrun likewise received presents from the guests, as tokens of peace and friendship. Then followed the feast, which lasted the rest of the day, being filled up with singing and the music of flutes and viols, to the great delight of the noble company.

In truth such feasting and wassail as Hilda made were never known before, and could never be exceeded in the world; for not only in the burg and the town was the merrymaking, but through the length and breadth of the land. When wassail had been drunk, and the knights had sung, Ortwin went to Horand and minded him of the words he had spoken when they were sailing to Normandy.

"Behold now," he said, "the fight is fought, the battle won: Gudrun sits in her mother's hall, and queen Hilda smiles again. Let thy voice resound in our midst, that the young men may boast that they heard the Lay of Amilee."

Then Horand beckoned to his page, who brought his harp of gold. He swept his hand over the strings, and the hall grew still as a snowy night. Beakers were pushed aside, jest and talk were hushed, and the men and women bent their heads to drink in the sound of the voice that had been silent for twenty years. Then he opened his mouth and sang a song, low, and sweet, the Death of the Flowers, which he



had made of the lilies of Storna while he was yet a beardless lad ; and this pleased the maids beyond all measure, so that they wept for very delight. Anon he upraised his voice and sang the Lay of Amilee, and so sweet was the strain, that those who listened to it felt their hearts well over with the bliss and gladness of long-forgotten days. For it told of all pleasant and lovely things in the world ; of the bright days of summer, when sunshine lies on the hills, and the desert heath is decked with tender flowers, when roses bloom at Campatilla, and the nightingales sing in the Westewald. It told of white sailed boats faring upon the summer sea, bluer than the heavens ; and of the love of young hearts, and the sharp, sweet, sorrows of the days of wooing. It told of the joys of the chase, when cool autumn days are at hand, and the yellow leaves fall, and the woods echo with the cheer, and the laugh, and the merry notes of the horn. And while he sang, those who listened seemed to smell the roses and hear the song of the birds ; and the old grew young again, and walked the woods in May gladness, and loved, and feared, and wept, as in the days of yore.

But suddenly he changed his song, and sang of the ancient fights and feuds, of the daring deed at Balyan, the battle at Waleis, the struggle on the Wulpensand ; and the old warriors began to bestir themselves ; the lion woke up in Wat's face, and Irolt clenched his mighty fist and knit his thunderous brows.

Then he sang of the sea, and told how they had



battled with the angry waves of the northern main, and borne the brunt of the black tempest in many a starless night, and scaped the dangerous coast of Norway, and the whirling Maelstrom, and seen the midnight sun, broad and red, behind the cliffs of Thule.

Then, bating his voice, he sang of the slain, of those who had perished in their prime and lay buried among strangers, or down deep in the sea, of him who slept on the Wulpensand ; and Queen Hilda's heart melted within her, while she wept blessed tears for the love of her youth. But softer still grew his voice, while he told how fair times pass over, and beauty and joy fly with them, how winter snow lies in the hair, and the last still haven draws nigh ; and then he sang of holy thoughts beyond the grave and all time ; and tears fell from hard eyes and ran down the cheeks of the women and over the beards of the men.

But they were not sad ! Good sooth they were as happy as if they were with the angels in heaven, while they hearkened to Horand's sweet voice ; even old Wat sat there, hushed and meek as a little child, and felt as if he could have forgiven Gerlinta.

Then Horand ended his song, and was silent awhile, but anon he arose, and calling to his page bade him take the harp and cast it into the sea, for he should sing no more. Thereupon the young men sprang to their feet and gathered round Horand, and each raising his right hand swore to hold Horand's memory dear to the latest day, and tell of the deeds



which he and Wat had done to their children's children. Then came Gudrun and kissed him, likewise the other brides and Queen Hilda; and the old heroes grasped his hand, and thanked him that he had woven their names into his song.

Therewith ended the wedding-feast at Matalan, and the next day the four kings made ready to lead their brides home. The first who left the land were Hartmut and Hiltburga; with them went the Norman knights and maidens who had been taken prisoners at Cassian; also Irolt, who was charged to deliver the land and burgs into Hartmut's hands.

Each of the captives received a gift from Hilda, and such loving usage that they bade their hostess farewell with many tears. The noble queen went with them to the shore; and Gudrun parted from Hiltburga with loving words, kissing her oft, for she knew they would meet no more. Hartmut had a fair voyage home; and received his lands back peaceably, and ruled with Hiltburga in happiness and honour many years.

The next to go was Siegfried with his fair bride. The Moorlanders left the harbour singing songs, rejoicing that they should see their land again, and Gudrun went with them to the strand, and watched the ships across the sea.

It was now Gudrun's turn to depart, and with her went Ortrun, for their road was the same for many leagues. Hilda bade her daughter farewell with much weeping; and kissed and blessed her upon the threshold.



“Dear mother,” said Gudrun, “be comforted for the dead, and believe that I and Herwig will fail in naught that may give thee solace.”

“Dear daughter,” answered the queen, “see that I have messengers from thee four times a year, and my loneliness will be less hard to endure.”

This Gudrun promised ; and after Herwig and Ortwin had taken farewell, the noble company rode away with mingled tears and smiles, turning oft with fond looks towards the fading turrets of Matalan. Nevertheless they were full of joy, for all felt that they had won their life's delight ; and that the long sorrow was come to an end. When they reached the cross-roads they bade each other farewell. Ortwin and Herwig made a firm compact how they would abide in friendship, and rule their lands wisely : and Ortrun kissed Gudrun, bidding God prosper her, and thanking her again for having restored Hartmut's lands.

As for the rest of Gudrun's life, of the three sons she bore Herwig, and of Herwig's wars with King Olaf, is it not written in the chronicle of the monk Wolfgang of Heisterbach, which is kept to this day in the abbey of Wahlheim near the Danube ?

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